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IS THE KINGDOM AGE AT HAND?

REV. E. M. MILLIGAN, D.D.

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IS THE KINGDOM AGE AT HAND?

An Interpretation of Portions of Daniel's Prophecy and The Book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ

BY

REV. E. M. MILLIGAN, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "PREMILLENARIAN BELIEFS," "THE TWO MESSAGES OF THE GOSPEL," "WHERE ARE THE DEAD?" ETC.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In preparing and in offering this book to the public as an aid to the better understanding of the prophecies of Scripture, the author was influenced by a desire (a) To direct attention to certain rules or principles required for the correct interpretation of the Bible, which, although not unknown to the scholarship of the Church, are nevertheless too generally ignored by those who undertake to furnish expositions of the Word of God. (b) To demonstrate that, when these rules are faithfully and consistently employed, much of the mystery and many of the difficulties found in the Bible disappear, and an intelligent understanding of Scripture becomes possible. (c) To thus commend to the more general use of Bible readers and students said rules in the confident expectation that the employment of the same will promote agreement as to what really is taught in the Bible. (d) To supply an interpretation of certain important prophecies that will be understood by Christians of average intelligence and that will afford them a clearer understanding of what God has revealed for our learning. (e) To call attention to the important fact that we are *right now* living at the very end-time of this present evil age, and that before a great while, possibly even within the next generation, the fulfilment of prophecies that predict the great tribulation and the Day of the Lord will awaken both a lukewarm Church and a godless world from their fancied security, and subject them to the wrath of God and of the Lamb, unless they repent and begin at once to improve their day of opportunity. If only in some measurable degree these objects are attained, the work of the author will not have been in vain.

To understand prophecy it is important to have in mind the relation between "The times of the Gentiles," and "This present evil age." The author understands that these overlap and parallel each other about as follows:

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"The times of the Gentiles" began about 603 B.C., or when the prophet Daniel, having interpreted the forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar, informed him also that he was the "Head of gold" that was seen on the great image that symbolized Gentile world dominion (Dan. 2:38). The chief events mentioned in prophecy in connection with "the times of the Gentiles" are (1) The decree of Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign about 444 B.C., to rebuild Jerusalem (Neh. 2:1). (2) The building of the city completed in troublous times after seven weeks, or forty-nine years (Dan. 9:25). (3) The fact that sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years, after that event, the Jewish Messiah, Whose birth, death, resurrection, and ascension are recorded in the New Testament, would be cut off, or wholly rejected (Dan. 9:26) by the Jewish nation notwithstanding the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12). (4) In consequence the Abrahamic covenant was suspended and the Jews were cast off about 39 A.D. (Rom. 11:15, 20, 23). (5) At that point God ceased to reckon the flight of time and it will continue to be ignored until God returns and deals again with His people Israel under the Abrahamic covenant (Acts 15:16). This will be at the end of the dispensation of grace when the fulness of the Gentiles has been brought into the Church (Rom. 11:25). (6) In the meanwhile, the holy city, Jerusalem, after being destroyed in 70 A.D. (Matt. 24:1, 2), was to remain under the dominion of Gentile world power *until* "the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled" (Lk. 21:24).

Before that end-time comes there are other predicted events to be fulfilled: (1) The return of God's people Israel to the land of their fathers from all the nations whither they have been scattered (Deut. 30:1-10). (2) The Antichrist, or world emperor, must be revealed (2 Thes. 2:3). (3) He will make a covenant with the Jewish nation (Isa. 28:15-18) that is to continue for one week, or seven years (Dan. 9:27), and, under the protection of the Antichrist, that nation will worship the God of their fathers according to all the forms and ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual. However, after three and a half years, (4) Antichrist will come to the temple in Jerusalem (Matt. 24:15) and demand that the Jews shall worship him as their

god (2 Thes. 2:4). And on their refusal so to do (5) Antichrist will break the covenant and for the remaining three and a half years, or forty-two months (Rev. 11:2) he will greatly afflict and persecute that nation (Dan. 9:27) and besiege their city, Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-3). (6) This siege will continue with varying success during all of the forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days. Then a great earthquake will destroy Babylon and the cities of the nations (Rev. 16:19), and then Antichrist will abandon finally the siege of Jerusalem of which a remnant of the Jews will still have possession (Zech. 14:2, 3), and with that event "the times of the Gentiles" will end.

Pentecost, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, about 33 A.D., marks the end of the Mosaic age or dispensation, and the beginning of "This present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). The Jews were then given a further opportunity to repent of their sins and to accept their Messiah Whom they slew in ignorance (Acts 2:14-41). But when the rulers of that nation had demonstrated their determination to reject Jesus as their Messiah, about 39 A.D., then God's covenant with that nation was suspended, the apostles turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46), and at that time began the dispensation of the grace of God (Eph. 3:1, 2) and the taking out of the Church from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14). The epistles to the seven churches in Asia (Rev., chs. 2-3) furnish a forecast of the history of the Visible Church during the entire dispensation of grace. At the end of that period the True Church, or the Church in mystery (Eph. 5:32), called also the Bride of Christ and the Lamb's Wife, which has been built up within the Visible Church, or within the Church which is Christ's body (Eph. 5:23), will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thes. 4:16, 17). The Holy Spirit will depart with the True Church (2 Thes. 2:7) and the Visible Church that still remains on the earth will then fall away, or apostatize (2 Thes. 2:3).

At that point begin "The latter days" (Dan. 2:28; 10:14), or "the end of the days" (Dan. 11:40; 12:13), when God will again deal with His people Israel under the Abrahamic covenant. This will be a period of seven years. It is the last one of Daniel's seventy weeks, and the last seven of the four

hundred and ninety years within which time the Abrahamic covenant was to be completed (Dan. 9:24). Of these "latter days," the first three and a half years will be the time when God's judgments, described under the first four trumpets and the first four bowls of wrath, are abroad in the earth, and when the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). The remaining three and a half years, or forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, will be the time of the great tribulation (Matt. 24:21; Mk. 13:24) described under the last three trumpets and the last three bowls of wrath. In the Old Testament "the great tribulation" is called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). The "latter days" being synchronous with the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, they will end when the great earthquake destroys Babylon and causes the Antichrist to abandon the siege of Jerusalem.

However, beyond that point of time there are three other events that will occur before "this present evil age" ends: (1) Armageddon (Rev. 16:16); (2) The Supper of the Great God (Rev. 19:17, 18); and (3) The casting of the Beast and the False Prophet into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20), and the binding of Satan for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1, 2). The prophet Daniel declares that "in the midst of the week (seven years) he (the Antichrist) shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease (ch. 9:27). That will be the time when Antichrist begins "to scatter the power of the holy people (God's Israel)" (ch. 12:7), and for the accomplishment of that purpose there is allowed "a time, times, and a half," or three and a half years, equal to forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days. That period synchronizes, therefore, with "the great tribulation." Starting again at the same point, namely, "from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up (the Antichrist posing as God), there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days (ch. 12:11). That seems to point to Armageddon, where the armies of the Antichrist will be utterly destroyed by the great hail storm (Rev. 16:21), when in the day of the Lord the returning Christ shall tread the winepress of the wrath of God without the city, Jerusalem, or at Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-16). But once again Daniel says, "Blessed

is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (ch. 12:12). That is forty-five days later and during that month and a half it is possible that the fowls of the heavens will feast on the carcases of the slain at Armageddon. That will conclude the Supper of the Great God, and probably during the same period sentence will be passed and executed against the Beast, the False Prophet, and Satan. Thus the present evil age will end and the glorious Kingdom age with its righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, will have begun.

It is commonly agreed that those who refuse to believe the teachings of the Bible are chargeable with infidelity. But today the many make no distinction between the teachings of the Bible and mere "private interpretations" of the teachings of the Bible. Christian Scientists believe the Bible to be true "as spiritually interpreted by Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy." Multitudes of others also are ready to profess their belief in the teachings of the Bible, but only as "privately interpreted" to mean what they choose to regard as true. As a result, one who rejects "private interpretations" of Scripture, especially interpretations that have the approval of many Christians, or of some denomination of Christians, is very likely to be charged with heterodoxy. It will not be because he refuses to believe the Bible, but because he holds to the literal teachings of Scripture and rejects the "private interpretations" that others have given to these teachings.

By the consistent use and application of rules generally accepted in the School of Interpreters known as "The Futurists," or "The Literalists," the author of this book has certain understandings of what God has revealed for our learning, and he has faithfully presented the same although at times his understanding of the teachings of Scripture is opposed to what is by many held to be orthodox. This fact to some extent appears in this book, and may call forth criticism from some whose orthodoxy rests upon "private interpretations" of the Word of God. However, none of the teachings in this book that are apt to be regarded as unorthodox touch any of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, to all of which doctrines the author holds tenaciously, even to a degree that may cause

him to be further criticised as an extreme conservative. But rather than take the risk of "handling the Word of God deceitfully," or of "wresting the Scriptures," or of "making void the Word of God" by substituting the opinions of men for the literal teachings of the Book, the author prefers to submit to criticism even though some of the critics may be well-beloved brethren.

With the sincere wish that this study in prophecy that seeks to answer the question, Is the Kingdom Age near? may prove helpful to all who read the book, and especially to such Bible readers and students as love the truth and desire to secure a clearer understanding of the teachings of God's Word, this book is sent forth on its mission with the devout prayer that it may be used by the Holy Spirit to enable some seekers after truth to secure a better knowledge of the things which God has revealed for our learning, and which must shortly come to pass.

E. M. M.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

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IS THE KINGDOM AGE AT HAND?

Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY

Books: Wise and Otherwise

There are so many books that have been written by scholars of national and international repute on the books of Daniel and the Revelation, in more recent time especially on the latter prophecy, that it would seem as though the field even now had been more than sufficiently covered, and that other books on the same subject could hardly be expected to add anything of worth to what had been supplied.

Prophecy Not Understood by Many Today

The author of this book has long shared that belief. He would not presume, therefore, to offer to the Christian public, even with an apology for so doing, another book covering the same ground were it not for the fact that among Christians generally, both clerical and lay, it is recognized and freely acknowledged that the difficulties and problems presented in these prophecies, that have come down to our day through the centuries past, for the greater part still remain; the difficulties have not been surmounted, nor have the problems been solved.

Many earnest Bible readers and students today, some even above the average in intelligence, candidly confess that they seldom read either the prophecy of Daniel or the Book of the Revelation, simply because they are unable to understand these writings. Since they have found no satisfactory explanation for them, they claim to receive but little if any benefit from

reading these portions of Scripture. Although ministers at times select their texts from these books, still many frequently use such texts without any regard to the context, and as a mere accommodation for certain subjects, because, as they likewise confess, they have but little understanding of the prophecies.

Biblical and Textual Criticism Are Not Discussed

The problems that have to do chiefly with the authorship and the canonicity of these two prophecies, it is believed have been solved, at least to the general satisfaction of conservative Christians. Today, practically all evangelical churches agree that the prophecies of Daniel and of the Revelation have a well established right to be regarded as parts of the Holy Scripture; and, further, it is believed that these books were written respectively by Daniel the prophet, and by John the beloved disciple, and the apostle of Jesus Christ.

There also are many standard works published on both Biblical and Textual Criticism, and anything of that character is entirely foreign to the purpose of this book. While these studies have their importance for theological students, they are not necessary for the general reader. It is possible also to overestimate the profit to be gained by the pursuit of such study, which is unprofitable and positively harmful, if permitted to consume the time and usurp the place of devout and reverent reading of the Scriptures. Nothing should be allowed to deny one the opportunity for the prayerful and careful study and searching of the Bible itself. It is only God's Word that is a lamp to the feet and a light to the path; the entrance of which giveth light and maketh wise the simple,—provided he desires and seeks to be led into the truth by the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures.

Expositors Not Agreed Among Themselves

The purpose of this book is to suggest the method of interpreting the prophecies; also to help solve the problems and to remove the difficulties that remain and that are to be found especially in the prophecies of Daniel and of the Revelation.

Few interpreters even pretend to have satisfactorily overcome the difficulties they meet with in Daniel's prophecies, especially,

as these are related to the time factor so prominent in his prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

As to the Book of the Revelation, there are still three different schools of interpreters. And the adherents of each school firmly believe that their own plan and method of explaining this book is the only correct one:

The Preterists claim that all the prophecies of the Revelation have been fulfilled already in the struggles of the Jews and of the early Christians, and in the conquests of Greece and Rome.

In the Historical school, the advocates insist that the predictions contained in these prophecies are being progressively fulfilled. For the greater part, they believe these prophecies have been fulfilled today by certain events of history to which they point as having occurred since the days of the apostles. In their judgment we are at present in the period of the third, fourth, or fifth bowl of God's wrath against evil doers.

The Futurists, who generally also insist on holding to the literal meaning of the words used in Scripture, unless there should be clear proof of a figurative or symbolic use, believe that so much of these prophecies are about fulfilled as are contained in the seven epistles to the churches, but they generally hold that the seals have not as yet even begun to be opened, and they claim that all the judgments predicted under the trumpets and the bowls of divine wrath still await the future for their fulfilment

Inquirers Still Walk in Darkness

Faced with such conflicting claims, what can the layman believe other than that prophecy is not understood by any one? And that is the conclusion generally reached by laymen. It is an opinion shared also by not a few ministers of whom many have long since given up all hope of ever being able to understand these prophecies.

It appears quite evident, therefore, that there is still opportunity and even necessity for some further effort to throw the light of truth upon these "dark sayings of old." That the author of this book may be able so to do is the reason that has induced him to prepare and to offer this work to the public,

which will of course decide for itself what if any merits attach themselves to the offered explanation.

Partial Truth in All Explanations

That there are elements of truth to be found in the theories of each of the above mentioned schools of interpretation is reasonable to believe; otherwise they would have been unable to hold their ground for so long a time against the objections and criticisms which the several adherents of opposing schools have advanced as their reasons for refusing to accept any theory of interpretation as better than their own.

It is not less reasonable to conclude that there are also some errors to be found in the theories of each of these schools of interpreters; otherwise it would seem impossible that agreement should fail to have been reached after all these years of striving to little or no profit. This is specially true because the scholars, whose judgments have been at disagreement with each other, and whose opinions have so often clashed, are for the greater part Christian men and sincere seekers after truth who certainly would not hold out against a recognized superior method of interpretation, fairly well demonstrated to be correct, merely because it was opposed to a pet theory of their own.

The important and necessary thing, therefore, is not merely to examine the several theories of interpretation with the purpose to point out their errors, but rather the different methods ought to be carefully considered with a desire to learn what of truth may be contained in the theories of the several schools of interpreters. Thus, possibly, the correct method for expounding these great prophecies may be found, and a more general understanding and agreement concerning their teachings may be secured.

Separating Between the Wheat and the Chaff

The author of this book has faithfully endeavored to follow that plan. In performing the work he has tried to banish from his mind all prejudice, and all preconceived notions and preferences in order to avoid as far as possible mistakes in deciding what probably was wheat and what might be chaff. He has

sought also to form a correct judgment regarding both the strength and the weakness, the truth and the error contained in each of the several methods of interpretation as related especially to the prophecies of the Revelation.

And it is believed that this honest attempt to discover the truth has proved to be fairly successful. Like the bee that instinctively gathers the sweetness from a thousand flowers in order to produce its honey, so the author has tried to gather up the truth from dozens of books published by different able adherents of the several schools of interpretation. He has gleaned, also, from the writings of pre-millenarians and post-millenarians and from scores of pamphlets written by various authors some of whom were well known and others were unknown to fame, but each pamphlet set forth the understanding of some Christian writer regarding the teachings contained in these prophecies. Truth has been sought even from the writings of the modernists, or the liberal theologians, as they are pleased to style themselves, or, as writers of this type are classified by others, they are destructive critics and infidels. The author of this book, influenced by a supreme love for truth, has for more than thirty years been examining diligently the productions of many writers on the subject of prophecy with a sincere desire to discover truth wherever to be found, and to separate it from error in the hope of securing for himself a correct understanding of these great prophecies of the Bible.

In this labor of love for the truth, and for nothing more or less, or other, he has been helped both by hints and by suggestions, or by the mere casual observations of various writers, and not less by the criticisms and objections raised by these several writers against certain interpretations and against the different methods of interpretation. From information thus gathered it is believed now to be possible to set forth certain rules and principles, and to furnish a method for the exposition of these prophecies that will prove helpful in solving the problems, in removing the difficulties and in securing a much more general agreement concerning the truth taught in these marvelous books of prophecy. It is expected to prove that these are truly marvelous prophecies and their already fulfilled pre-

diction should compel the acknowledgment even from the most unwilling lips that these prophecies reveal "the finger of God."

Credit Due Chiefly to Others

For the results obtained no credit is claimed by the author of this book which contains but little of real value that may not be found in the writings of other, and of far more able scholars. But, unfortunately, owing to the fact that the author was seeking light and information in the first place chiefly for himself, with no thought of committing the result to writing, the many books and pamphlets read during the past more than a quarter of a century were not listed, and no record was kept of the various sources from which was received from time to time what is believed to be true knowledge and understanding concerning the teachings of these prophecies. Hence it is manifestly impossible to mention authorities in this book, and to give the credit that may be and unquestionably is due to the several writers whose works have proved most helpful, instructive and illuminating. The only helps used in preparing this book for publication were Young's Analytical Concordance, and Scofield's Reference Bible with Notes.

However, this may be said in justice to others, that in this book there is not a single rule or principle of interpretation that may not be found either as original or as endorsed suggestions in the writings of others. And most of the writers to whom credit is due are eminent and world renowned biblical scholars such as Brooks, Moody, Spurgeon, Pierson, Erdman, Moorehead, Scofield, Pember, and a score of others who are not less illustrious Christian writers. Probably not one of these scholars has accepted all the rules of interpretation to which attention will be called in this book, nor have they always consistently applied in their studies such of the principles as they do endorse. Therefore they are not to be held responsible, nor to be considered as authority for many of the conclusions reached by the author of this book. For the greater part the conclusions represent the author's own understanding of the Scriptures and he accepts full responsibility for the same. But every rule or principle given in this book has the endorsement of some one or more of the biblical scholars mentioned above.

These rules and principles for the correct interpretation of the prophecies of Scripture have not originated nor been discovered by the author of this book as a result of first hand investigation. His task has been merely to assemble, classify, and arrange the truth as others have pointed it out. And the faithful use of these rules and principles, combined and diligently applied, has made it possible to harmonize these prophecies, and to explain them in a manner so as to make clear and understandable their meaning and significance even to the average Bible reader, and to show to all who may read this book the great importance of the teachings of these prophecies especially now at the very end-time of this present evil age.

Chapter II

SCRIPTURE MUST INTERPRET ITSELF

Some Books of No Value to Seekers After Truth

There are two classes of biblical expositors who have written many books about the Bible, and who have furnished various explanations of the truths taught in the Scriptures, especially in the prophecies, whose works are of little if of any value at all in the search after truth. The reading of such books has resulted merely in the waste of precious time.

Destructive Critics Are Not Spirit Led Teachers

Expositors who are willing to match their ignorance concerning the Bible and its teachings as being of no less worth and authority than the infinite knowledge and the supreme authority of the God-Man, and who do not hesitate to dishonor Jesus Christ by boldly challenging His statements that "the Scriptures cannot be broken," and that "all will be fulfilled to the last jot and tittle," can hardly be supposed to have the benefit of the Holy Spirit to lead them into the truth. Their works suggest rather "the natural man who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are discerned by the Spirit."

Hence the efforts of such expositors to make up for what they do not know concerning the method of interpreting, and also the true teachings of the Bible, by loudly proclaiming the mere hypothetical theory, originally formulated by true scientists, of man's descent from an ape, as a fact established beyond all controversy, is proof sufficient that those who thus claim are themselves men who wholly lack the scientific spirit, who have discarded truly scientific methods, and whose conclusions therefore rest on "science falsely so called."

The further effort of such writers to hide their ignorance of

the Bible by calling attention to "the mistakes of Moses," and to the errors and disagreements, they claim to have discovered, in the various manuscripts of the P, D, and Q schools of the prophets, and their assertion that the Bible is a mere crazy quilt of these various and contradictory writings patched together by some unknown editor, is a further revelation either of their spiritual blindness or of their dishonesty, or of both.

Such writers think to establish the infallibility of their own views and opinions by extolling the great wisdom and the marvelous genius of modern scholarship represented exclusively today by the liberal theologians of whom they modestly make it clear that they are "IT." And by thus claiming for themselves high rank as scholars they would have all to understand that they are entitled to the last word; and because the seal of their approval has been stamped all over the aforementioned views and opinions, they declare that only old fogies and ignoramuses ever presume to question their authority as final, etc., ad nauseam.

The work of all such writers, whether Germans or hyphenated Americans or rationalistic-Germo-maniacs, has been found of no worth whatever in the search for truth. These moderns, in all their attacks upon the Bible, have not brought forward anything that the rationalists, infidels, and atheists of former centuries have not already used. Yet fearful of these fiery darts of Satan, many false professors,—often spelled with a capital "P,"—have surrendered and gone over to the camp of the enemy. But such missiles never yet have pierced the Christian's armor and they never will.

Private Interpretations Are Worthless

Then, too, there are many reverent and Christian expositors who are humble and spiritually minded students of the Word, yet their labor to unfold the teachings of prophecy, especially as found in the Book of Daniel and of the Revelation, is for the greater part unsatisfactory and unedifying because they are wedded to the habit of setting forth "private interpretations" in direct opposition to the plain teaching of Scripture that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. 1:20). There is of course but little agreement among

such expositors, and there never will be agreement among them while they cling to an unscriptural method of interpretation, substituting for Scripture "cunningly devised fables," and forgetting or neglecting at least to make any practical use of the most important of all rules for the correct understanding of God's Word, namely, that the Scripture must be its own interpreter.

Scripture Interpreted by Scripture: The Only Safe and Infallible Rule

The only safe and infallible rule for the interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. The use of this rule makes it possible to declare: "We speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." This rule requires that whenever there is a question concerning the meaning of any Scripture, that the true sense must be searched out and ascertained from other Scriptures that speak more clearly. This is the rule that the Reformers of the 16th century emphasized as agreeable to their understanding of what the Scriptures themselves taught regarding the method of their interpretation. And it is only by the consistent use and constant application of this safe rule that it is possible for the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scriptures, to become the Supreme Judge by whom all controversies of religion is to be determined; and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient (or modern) writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits is to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest (2 Pet. 1:19-21; 3:16; Ps. 119:105, 130; Isa. 8:19, 20; Lk. 24:44; John 5:16; Acts 15:15, 16; 1 Cor. 2:10-14).

The substitution of "private interpretations" for this only safe rule, so generally prevalent today among even Christian expositors, cannot be expected to result otherwise than to befog the meaning of Holy Scripture for multitudes of the unlearned, and to make agreement concerning its teachings simply impossible.

Private Interpretations Make Void the Word of God

Further, the many private interpretations today, especially of prophecy, have made void the Word of God even as Jesus

declared, in the days of His earthly ministry, had been done by the religious leaders and teachers of the Jewish people by use of the same method. Regarding this device of Satan to deceive, if it were possible the very elect of God, Christian scholars have not been sufficiently mindful nor on their guard and so they have permitted themselves to be caught by the wiles of the Devil.

When, after the conversion of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, the world almost en masse began to identify itself with the Church of Christ, her doctrines began to undergo change and modifications in order that they might conform to the thought and belief of heathendom which at that time had secured a position of commanding influence in the Visible Church. Later, also, both her doctrines and worship were corrupted further by the Papacy. These facts are recorded by Church historians generally.

The Reformation of the 16th century corrected this departure from the faith of the Apostolic Church in part, but only in part, because the practice of private interpretation of the Scriptures, —a practice introduced by Origen in the 3rd century,—had become so firmly established that neither in the 16th century nor since that time has the Christian Church entirely abandoned that false and pernicious method of handling the Word of God. As a result the Church still holds and teaches some things that are plainly contrary to the truth of divine revelation as it has been revealed for our learning. The following is an illustration:

THE WORD OF TRUTH	THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
To the law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word; there is no light in them.	In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
Christ . . . brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1:10).	Plato and Socrates taught the doctrine of immortality in their day.
God only hath immortality (1 Tim. 6:16).	Man also hath immortality.
Seek for glory, honor, immortality, eternal life (Rom. 2:7).	Man was created an immortal being; he has no need to seek for what he already possesses.
This mortal must put on immortality (1 Cor. 15:53).	Man is now an immortal, not a mortal being.

The explanation that it is only man's body that is mortal; that the immortality for which he is "to seek," and "to put on" is only for the body, and that it is his soul that hath immortality (Greek Anathasia, "deathlessness," or Aphtharsia, "incorruption") at once brings the teaching of the Church on this subject into conflict with the Scripture revelation concerning the penalty of sin: *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die."* Thus the Bible makes it very clear and certain that man's soul is neither incorruptible nor possessed of deathlessness. It is not less clearly revealed that man's soul is not to be annihilated for as corrupted and dead it is "to *abide* under God's wrath," and to be "tormented for the ages of the ages." The soul of man is destined, therefore, to a never ending existence as are also the Devil and his angels as spiritual beings, but never ending existence is not immortality in the Scriptural sense of that word, and man was not created immortal nor is he possessed today of immortality. The contrary teaching came from the world and not from the Word of God.

The soul of man is and was when first created both corruptible and mortal; it lives only while it continues in God's presence; it is deprived of life when on account of sin it is forsaken of God, the Source and Fountain of soul life, and when it is banished from God's presence to abide under His wrath. Only as Scripture is interpreted by Scripture will it be possible for the Church to avoid in her teaching confusion, contradiction, and false doctrines. It is only by the use of this safe rule of interpretation that the Church will be able to impart a true knowledge and understanding of the prophecies of God's Word to those whom it is her duty to teach and to instruct in divine truth.

The True Doctrine of Immortality

Immortality means something far more than mere exemption from annihilation, or than unending existence. It means more even than eternal life which depends upon God's good pleasure. Immortality is the very highest form of life; it is life divine and only God hath it. Concerning immortal life the Scriptures teach (1) that it is incorruptible life,—life that cannot by any possibility be defiled by evil. The Greek word aphthartos

means incorruptible; hence deathless or immortal as it is generally rendered (1 Tim. 1:17). God (essential deity) cannot be tempted to evil, neither tempteth He any man (James 1:13). (2) It is independent life,—life *in oneself* apart from any other source (John 5:26), and so absolutely under one's own control (John 10:17, 18). Further, immortality means according to the Scriptures (3) originating or creative life,—life that is able to impart or to communicate life to others. God the Father hath life *in Himself;* He gave to Jesus as the Son of Man to have life also *in Himself.* Each of these Persons, therefore, is possessed of endless duration (Heb. 7:16), and each has the power to give life to whom He will (John 5:21, 25-29).

Immortality an Attribute of the Divine Nature

Thus immortality as the highest form of life,—the life of God Himself, is incorruptible, independent, and creative. It is, according to Scripture, an essential attribute only of the divine nature. And all such of the redeemed as become immortal beings will have faithfully responded to "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and so will have secured for themselves "a full reward," the very highest reward of glory (2 John 8).

The Reformers Neglect Their Own Rule of Interpretation

A further illustration of the neglect of this safe rule of interpretation may be profitably considered. In the controversy that was carried on among the Reformers of the 16th century regarding the great Scriptural doctrine of election, the Calvinists were pressed for an answer to the question, How can God foreknow the acts of free-moral agents? And disregarding in the heat of controversy the rule formulated by the Westminster divines themselves, namely, that the Scripture must interpret Scripture, and that all controversies of religion must be settled by the Holy Spirit speaking through the Word of God, the answer was given, that divine foreknowledge of the acts of free moral agents was made possible and certain because, by an immutable decree, the Sovereign God determines whatsoever comes to pass.

Fatalism Is at the Root of Any Such Teaching

From such a pronouncement it was simply impossible successfully to refute the charge that Calvinism, like Mohammedanism, was essentially fatalistic. It must be evident to each thoughtful mind that a moral being, whose every thought and act are determined for him, even before his birth, by an immutable decree of a Sovereign and Omnipotent God, is not free. Rather such a being is a mere machine that when set in motion does certain things because it cannot do any thing other. The explanation that in the face of such teaching seeks to maintain the freedom of man as a moral being by setting up the claim that God is not to be held responsible for what a man does, although what a man does must be in accordance with the immutable decree of God, is worse than no explanation at all in the attempt to answer and to refute the charge of fatalism.

The False Teaching Is Continued to This Day

In all the books of theology prepared by Calvinistic writers even to this day, the divine foreknowledge still is declared to depend on God's decree. However, it is only the hyper-Calvinists, or those who are willing even yet to profess the belief that "there are infants in hell a span long," who accept and consistently try to defend and to maintain teachings that are such a monstrous perversion of what God has revealed in the Scriptures for our learning. Jesus declared, It is not the will of your Heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish. He set a little child in the midst of His disciples saying, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom." And taking the little ones in His arms and pressing them to His great loving heart, Jesus blessed them and said, "Suffer the little ones to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

The Modified Calvinism

The great majority of Calvinists today repudiate hyper-Calvinism, but they make no effort to prove that it is unscriptural. That work they leave to theologians, and are content

merely to declare that they do not believe in "elect infants." They also generally refrain from preaching on the doctrines either of the Sovereignty or of the Decrees of God in order thus to avoid awakening controversy. When asked embarrassing questions concerning the doctrine of election, the usual reply of those who hold to a modified Calvinistic teaching is that they believe the doctrine because it is plainly taught in the Scripture, but they confess not to understand the doctrine fully themselves, and so admit their inability satisfactorily to explain to inquirers the mysteries connected with it.

God's Decree Determined by Foreknowledge

In Scripture however the divine decree is declared to rest on the foreknowledge of God and not the reverse. It is written, "Whom He did *foreknow,* He also did predestinate," rather than, "Whom He did predestinate, He also did foreknow that they should be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29).

With the infinite God all things, including foreknowledge, are possible. But as a finite being man is not always able to answer intelligently the question: How can these things be? Man has learned that there are certain physical laws that operate uniformly throughout the universe; he has given names to these laws, and attributes certain known effects to them as the cause. But what are these laws? whence come they? what is the secret of these laws being able to maintain the earth suspended upon nothing? How did God make the eye to see, or the ear to hear, or the bones to grow in the womb of her that is with child? And there are revealed truths also concerning which no man is able to explain the how or the why? To attempt so to do is the height of presumption and folly; it will solve no difficulty connected with the understanding of these things, but it may lead to the formulation of doctrines which to attempt to maintain will place one in the position of opposing both the truth of Scripture and the testimony of his own senses.

Man Knows Himself to be a Free Agent

Man is a free moral agent and therefore responsible to his Creator for all he thinks and does or neglects to do, and also

for the results which fix irrevocably his destiny. This the Scriptures plainly teach and it agrees with every man's knowledge and conscience concerning himself. Man knows he is a free agent except as he is enslaved by his own evil habits and appetites for the cultivation of which, if not for the possession, he is himself alone responsible.

Nothing Is Hidden From God

Scripture also reveals that known unto God are all His works from the beginning. He needs not that any one should tell Him what is in man for He knows all things, even the secret thoughts of the heart. To those who would raise the question, How? Jesus has replied when He reminded Nicodemus that there were other things beside great spiritual verities that man did not know and need not expect to understand (John 3:8). There is no fatalism in what the Scriptures teach regarding the doctrine of election. The elect are those whom God foreknew. That is all, and God deals justly with every one of whom each is free to choose what his just deserts shall be.

Can God be sovereign and at the same time man be free, if he so wills, to disobey and resist the authority of God? Most assuredly He can be, because it is only by sovereign permission that for the present man is free to do as he may choose; and the freedom he enjoys does not release him from accountability to his Sovereign Creator who in due time will call for a reckoning. Then sovereignty will assert itself, and by the sentence pronounced every man will receive according to his works whether they have been good or evil, and there will be given no opportunity to appeal from the verdict then delivered.

Non-Resistance to Evil

If a Quaker chose to resist the demands of a highway robber; and if he were willing to fight against such wrong, he might be able easily to overcome the robber, to prevent the crime, and to hand the criminal over to justice. But non-resistance is a tenet of Quakers; they conscientiously profess a willingness to suffer even wrong and injustice rather than to inflict deserved punishment on an offender. That is the spirit of Christ and He commands His followers to cultivate that spirit and to

practice according to it in all personal matters and relations in their private dealings with others.

God the Only Rightful Avenger of Those Who Suffer Unjustly

However, it was not the plan or purpose of Jesus to have those willing to practice non-resistance to evil to suffer without any protection from wrong and injustice. Vengeance belongs to God Who hath ordained civil government and, as His minister, the civil magistrate was delegated the power of the sword of justice, and he was to be a terror to evil-doers. Jesus, therefore, also commanded His followers, To render unto Caesar (the civil ruler), the things that are Caesar's. These things include all lawful encouragement and support of the civil authority in the work of maintaining justice, and of fighting against wrong and injustice.

Some Quakers Oppose God's Plan

But, contrary to the will of God, some Quakers would have even civil governments practice non-resistance to evil, and thus leave every one to the tender mercies of the wicked which are cruel. All who conscientiously practice, as do some of the Quakers, according to this spirit of non-resistance, thereby become responsible for the existence and spread of evil to the full extent to which they might have prevented it, but did not choose to prevent it.

God's Responsibility for Evil

Every one may rightly be held responsible for evil that it was in his power to prevent, but which he chose not to prevent. And for that reason God accepts responsibility for the evil which He permits. He is not the Author of evil, for He did not originate it; neither tempteth He any man to do evil. But God had power to prevent sin from entering into this world, yet He permitted it to enter. He has the power also to bring swift punishment upon all evil-doers, to inflict upon them at once their just deserts, and thus to destroy them from the earth. But, instead of dealing thus with transgressors, God chooses to deal patiently, lovingly, graciously with sinners for the present, to

afford them opportunity to repent of their sins, to forsake them, and to return unto Him for His pardon and blessing.

This is God's way although He foreknew that there would be multitudes, like Pharaoh, who would harden their hearts, and continue to pursue their evil ways, because God's way of dealing with them makes it possible for them to deceive themselves with the false hope and expectation that they can prosper and get success in sin. They, therefore, choose to follow their own course, and for a time they enjoy the wages of unrighteousness apparently without fear of the consequences, and in the belief that there is no danger of their ever being overtaken by divine justice. For this reason that God permits evil which He has power to prevent, He accepts the responsibility for its presence in the world. Hence in Scripture God declares, "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." He is said also to have hardened Pharaoh's heart, and He did, but only by the favors granted unto him that caused Pharaoh to harden his own heart. And so the prophet asks, "Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?" The very form of the question places the responsibility on God, and He accepts it, because He could have prevented the evil if He had willed so to do.

Let Scripture interpret itself. Let the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Word of God, be the Supreme Judge of what is true and what is false doctrine, and the religious controversies, that today cause the true disciples of Jesus Christ to dwell apart from each other in opposing camps would be as a morning cloud and as the early dew that quickly pass away (Hos. 6:4).

Chapter III

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SACRED NUMBERS

Sacred Numbers Throw Light on the Meaning of Scripture

Another principle that must be considered is the use made in Scripture of Sacred Numbers. There are some who may ridicule this suggestion as cabalistic, and decide without further troubling themselves to investigate that they will have nothing to do with what they regard as mere triviality. Others may consider the suggestion as the intimation of an intention to wrest the teaching of the Bible. It is unfortunate for those who may take such a position or draw such conclusions, especially if they persist in that frame of mind. For it can be plainly demonstrated that Sacred Numbers were employed by the prophets, were used by Jesus Himself in some of His teachings, also that they are everywhere employed throughout the Book of the Revelation, and further there are many portions of Scripture of which the full meaning and significance will rightly be understood only when these Sacred Numbers are recognized, when their meaning is understood, and when the purpose for which they were employed is duly considered.

Among all who have interested themselves in the subject of Sacred Numbers it is commonly recognized that a certain mystical value is attached to numbers in both the later Jewish and the early Christian philosophy. While the Bible has nowhere expressly endorsed the idea, yet it does furnish, as will be shown, numerous examples of the use made of such numbers by the inspired writers. Those who desire to investigate the subject for themselves may consult any good Dictionary of the Bible, such as Smith's, or Schaff-Herzog, or any other similar work, or they might read the commentary of Seiss on the Revelation.

Meaning of Sacred Numbers

Without presenting at length the reasoning by which the meaning of certain numbers is determined, there are given here the substantially-agreed-upon conclusions of Christian students who have given special attention to this subject:

One, represents the unity of the Godhead (Deut. 6:4; Eph. 4:5).

Two, stands for God the Father and Son in covenant relation. Two Testaments or Covenants, the Old and the New. Attention might also be called to the fact, that the name Jehovah is never applied to God the Father except when the covenant relation with His Son is indicated (Ps. 2); the suffering Servant of Jehovah (Isa. 42:1-7; 49:1-7; 52:13-15; 53:1-12).

Three, represents the Trinity, and a divine work (2 Cor. 13:14).

Four, signifies the earth with its four corners, four directions: N. S. E. W., four winds, etc.

Five, points to human incompleteness and insufficiency (Matt. 14:17; 25:2; 1 Cor. 14:19).

Six, represents evil, the Devil, Antichrist, the consummation of evil, 666, or 616 indicating God's control of evil, and of the evil one. The number One between Six and Six.

Seven, stands for dispensational fulness or completion: seventh year Sabbath multiplied by seven ushers in the Jubilee (Lev. chapter 25).

Eight, represents a new beginning: eight persons in the ark; a child to be circumcised on the eighth day.

Nine, signifies human imperfection and shortcoming (Lk. 17:17).

Ten, stands for the completion of man's imperfect work (Matt. 23:23; Lk. 18:12).

Twelve, represents the complete or finished work of God: twelve months in a year; twelve tribes of Israel; twelve apostles; twelve foundations, and twelve gates for the New Jerusalem.

Sacred Numbers in the Teachings of Jesus

The use that Jesus made of Sacred Numbers appears for example in the seven parables of the Kingdom to illustrate its beginning, progress, and consummation during this present evil age and down to the very end of the dispensation. Seven indi-

cating dispensational completion. These same parables are further divided into two groups: the first of three parables in which the divine work is set forth; and the last group of four parables, and in the first parable of this second group leaven or evil is introduced to set forth the work of man who is of the earth, earthy,—a work that at the end will require the separation of the wicked from the just.

Sacred Numbers in the Book of the Revelation

The employment of these numbers in the Book of the Revelation is recognized and admitted by all expositors of every school. The Revelation has been called, as it undoubtedly is, the book of Sevens, even by some who fail to catch the significance of the fact. It is the book of seven stars, seven candlesticks, seven epistles, seven churches, seven spirits, seven eyes, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls, seven plagues, etc. Thus to all who understood the meaning, and who consider the significance of the number seven, the fact cannot escape attention that dispensational fulness or completion is proclaimed from the beginning to the end of this wonderful prophecy.

But a further use of Sacred Numbers throughout the Revelation is not less in evidence although not so generally recognized. The seven epistles are divided into two groups. In the first three epistles the call to hear what the Spirit saith comes *before* the promise given to him that overcometh; in the last four epistles this same call comes *after* the promise to him that overcometh. And in the first three churches to which the epistles are sent it is the good that predominates as the result of divine work, while in the last four it is evil and wickedness that hold the supreme place; thus indicating very plainly the work of man who is of the earth, earthy. The seven seals also are divided into two groups of four and three. The first four present earthly agencies: horses going forth; while the last three point unmistakably to divine agencies: the altar, the earthquake, and the angelic trumpeters.

The seven trumpets also are similarly divided: four trumpets followed by three woe trumpets and these two groups set forth respectively natural and supernatural agencies employed in sending judgments upon the earth. Further, when the fifth

trumpet sounds (five, the number for human insufficiency), which is the first woe trumpet, God makes a difference between men and only those who have not the seal of God on their foreheads are to suffer from the judgments.

And the bowls of wrath are divided into three groups of three, three, and one. In the first three plagues God employs natural agencies; in the next three, supernatural agencies are used to fulfil His will, while the last and final plague combines both natural and supernatural agencies: the earthquake, and the hail such as never was seen before. Thus is filled up the cup of the wrath of God to be poured out upon the Beast or the Antichrist and his kingdom.

The fact of dividing these sevens into groups of three and four, or four and three, and the last into three, three, and one, has a meaning that should not be overlooked. But while these divisions may be recognized and admitted, yet the significance will be understood only by those who have in mind what these Sacred Numbers represent and what their use in the prophecy is intended to indicate.

The Great Day of the Lord

It is further to be noted that the opening of the sixth seal brings men face to face with the great day of the wrath of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 6:17). The sounding of the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13-19), and also the pouring out of the sixth bowl direct attention to the Gentile nations prepared to engage in the battle of Armageddon,—the battle of that great day of God Almighty (Rev. 16:14, 16, 17). Here, then, the number six which stands for evil, for the Devil, and for Satan's chief representative on earth, the Antichrist, leads up to one and the same event, namely, the great and dreadful day of the Lord when the great winepress of the wrath of God will be trodden without the city of Jerusalem by the Rider on the white horse. This Rider will be the returning Christ Who is King of kings and Lord of lords and those who would not have the God-man to reign over them will at that time be completely overthrown and slain (Rev. 14:19, 20; 19:17-21). Surely the very manifest, constant, and consistent employment of these Sacred Numbers, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, in this Book of the Revelation

was not a mere accident. These numbers were evidently used designedly by the inspired penman, and their significance makes plain and easily understood the teachings of this prophecy for those who have eyes to see or who have discernment by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter IV

NINE GREAT COVENANTS

The Covenants Must Be Distinguished

Another principle or rule to be carefully observed by those who wish to understand the Book of the Revelation or of any of the prophecies of Scripture requires that the several covenants revealed in the Bible for our learning shall be recognized and distinguished. It is not less important to distinguish also the different parties to these covenants; also the different promises offered as a reward for the keeping of the same, and the different penalties threatened and to be visited upon covenant-breakers. All of these things should be kept intelligently in mind and the several promised rewards and the threatened penalties, which are both parts of the covenants, should never be appropriated or applied to any person or group of persons other than such as are parties to the particular covenant in which said rewards and penalties are embodied.

Confusion Follows Neglect to Distinguish Between Things That Differ

The oath-bound covenant which God made with David and his sons assured to them the right to the throne, and a reasonable interpretation of Scripture demands that the right shall be limited to David's house to the exclusion of all other families even though these families, not less than David and his sons, were of the tribe of Judah. This requirement all intelligent persons will admit without any quibbling; hence they should also recognize that it is contrary to the principles of sound exegesis to hand over the blessings provided in the Sinaitic covenant for the nation of Israel to those who are not and who never were parties to that covenant.

The very common disregard of the rule that requires all who desire to understand the Scriptures to distinguish carefully between persons and things that are entirely different has resulted in making the Bible a sealed book to multitudes of Christians who today have but little understanding of the Scriptures, especially of the great prophecies written therein. It has led also to the setting forth of many false doctrines which fortunately do not conflict with the truth that is essential to salvation.

The Covenant of Redemption

The Bible reveals with greater or less clearness that there are in all nine different covenants. And (1) The Covenant of Redemption to which God the Father and God the Son are Parties. This covenant was ratified in eternity. Its purpose was to satisfy and to harmonize the divine holiness, justice, and truth with the act of pardoning, cleansing, and restoring to divine favor and fellowship a race that had come under the curse of sin and were justly deserving of its penalty.

This Covenant was made possible by the infinite love of the Father for the lost race of humanity,—a love that moved him (a) to accept His only Begotten Son as the Substitute for sinners, (b) to lay upon that Beloved Son the iniquity of us all, (c) to deal with Him as though He were the real culprit, and hence (d) to require that He should make His soul an offering for sin. Nothing less than these conditions would fully satisfy the demands of divine justice and vindicate the truth of God Who had declared, The soul that sinneth shall die.

Further, this Covenant was made possible because of the infinite love of the Son of God Who so loved the world of lost humanity that He was moved (a) to voluntarily empty Himself of the glory and power of deity which He possessed on equality with the Father, (b) to submit willingly to the humiliation and demotion of being born of a woman, (c) to take on Himself man's nature and likeness so that He would be bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, (d) to obey perfectly the law of God and so to qualify as the Substitute of a ruined race, and as the Saviour and Redeemer of sin-cursed humanity (e) to die for us on the Cross. Since Jesus thus agreed to satisfy

every claim of divine justice on behalf of sinners it was possible for Him to free man from the law as a covenant of works, and to open the way as the Mediator of a new covenant for dealing with sinners graciously.

The Promise of the Covenant

This Covenant provided that as the Second Adam the God-Man would become the Federal Head of a new race that was to include (a) all such members of the human family as should be spiritually born again, washed, and sanctified, or set apart unto God by the Holy Spirit, (b) such, also, as should be justified and saved in Christ by having imputed to them all the merits of His perfect obedience, and by being permitted to share in His vicarious death by which atonement was made for their sins, and (c) all who should receive the free gift of eternal life to be bestowed upon them on the one condition of their possessing and exercising intelligent and true faith in Christ as their Redeemer.

And in consideration of Christ's work being duly performed to make possible such a new race, the promise of the Covenant to Him was that He should be the rightful inheritor of the earth over which He should have the dominion. And agreeable to His own pleasure He could then share all earthly glory, honor and riches with His redeemed whom He had ransomed with His own blood.

A further promise of that Covenant assured that the humiliation, suffering and death which Jesus Christ endured voluntarily because of His incomprehensible love for the world of lost humanity should not be in vain. He was therefore guaranteed that He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And it may be safely concluded that a love great enough to die for enemies would not be satisfied with the salvation of merely a comparative handful.

The special condition of this Covenant of Redemption that required not the death of the body only, but rather that the very soul of the Son of Man should be made an offering for sin; or in other words, that He would submit to be even forsaken of God, was the cup that the Father gave Him to drink to the bitter dregs. And from the drinking of that cup there

was no possible escape for Christ Who as the Substitute was made sin for us.

This therefore was a just covenant. There is in it not a single element of grace which remits the penalty and pardons the guilty,—the very acts which justice does not and cannot perform, or it would cease to be justice. Hence, notwithstanding the infinite love of the Father for His Only Begotten Son, Who had become the Substitute for sinners, it was impossible for a just God to deal with Him graciously. And there is not an element of grace to be found in the conditions imposed upon Christ in the Covenant of Redemption, and accepted by the Son of God. Herein is love; not that we loved Him, but that He loved us while we were yet enemies and gave Himself to be the propitiation for our sins.

This Covenant therefore, in which every demand of divine justice was met and fully satisfied by a Substitute, was the ground and foundation on which rested every covenant that was ever made between a holy God and man as His sinful creature. In all succeeding covenants grace appears and is operative to a greater or less degree, although it was only after the conditions of the Covenant of Redemption were fully complied with at the First Advent, that it became clearly manifest that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

The Edenic Covenant

In the (2) or The Edenic Covenant the parties were Jehovah, the Second Person of the Godhead, and Adam as he was at first created in God's image and likeness. As created a perfect man in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness Adam was well pleasing to God, and he delighted also in the companionship and fellowship of His Creator. The Covenant made with him was ratified in time, not in eternity, and as the Federal head of the race which was to descend from him by ordinary generation, Adam accepted the condition of that Covenant which required full submission and perfect obedience to the will of God, both for himself and for his posterity.

The Edenic Covenant assured to man the right to possess and enjoy the earth, to have the dominion over it and over all the lower orders of living creatures whether on the earth or in the

sea or in the air, provided its condition was satisfied. For failure to conform to the condition of that Covenant the penalty to be visited upon man was instant death: The *day* thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die. Yielding to the tempter, man broke the Covenant; he thus forfeited all claim to its blessings and incurred its penalty.

But although after his fall man was driven out of the Garden of Eden to signify that he had forfeited his right to possess and to have the dominion over the earth; and although by his own act of hiding from God Adam revealed that he had suffered sin's penalty, the death of his soul which depended for its life on near and intimate relation and fellowship with God, still as a physical being, and also under the curse of sin, man was permitted for a time at least both to live and to remain on the earth.

The Covenant of the Altar

This fact made necessary another covenant (3) The Covenant of the Altar. And to this covenant the parties were Jehovah (Jesus) and the fallen race as represented by both Adam and Eve. And to the fact so plainly recorded that after the Fall Adam and his wife continued to live and to dwell on the earth many infidels and atheists have directed attention. They thus support their contention that the Bible is not true, or if it is true then they claim that the God of the Bible does not tell the truth because the record shows Adam did not die the very day he ate of the forbidden fruit.

Divine Justice, Righteousness, and Truth Vindicated by the Substitute

The difference between physical and spiritual death, or between the death of the body as a necessary consequence of sin, and the death of the soul as the wages or penalty of sin, can be easily explained.

Even though as a physical being Adam continued to live, yet he suffered sin's penalty. He was dead spiritually even while he lived physically. The body of man dies only when the spirit departs, or when the dissolution between his body and his soul occurs. The spirit or soul of man dies when, on account of sin,

it is banished from God's Presence, or when it is forsaken by God and thus is separated from the Source on which its life depends. Adam hiding from God among the trees of the Garden establishes the fact that he died as a spiritual being the very day he ate of the forbidden fruit.

But, although a sin-cursed creature, Adam not only lived on the earth as a physical being, but he continued also to enjoy divine fellowship and to receive divine favors. How can that fact be reconciled with the revelation that God his Creator is a Being of infinite holiness and righteousness; He cannot lie, His truth is unchanging, His justice is implacable and He is of purer eyes than even to look upon sin and fail to destroy it?

Such seemingly contradictory facts of revelation can be harmonized only as one understands the operation of the merciful principle of substitution and the mediatorial system for both of which the Covenant of Redemption made provision. True, the conditions of that covenant were not satisfied by the Second Person of the adorable Trinity until in the fulness of time the Voice, or the Word of God became flesh. Then, having taken upon Himself our nature, He, as the God-Man by His life of perfect obedience to the holy law of God, by His death on the Cross as the sinner's Substitute, and by His resurrection and ascension, discharged fully all the obligations accepted by Him as a Party to that covenant. Nevertheless that covenant which rested on the foundation of justice and judgment furnished the only ground on which it was possible for the Voice of God, or Jehovah Jesus, to stand after man's fall and as the Mediator of all other covenants entered into between a holy God and a fallen and sin-cursed race to introduce the element of grace in dealing with the guilty.

And the distinction between mercy and grace is here to be noted. Mercy is the manifestation of love and good will to the miserable. Grace is the provision of love and good will made for the guilty. As merciful God makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust. God's mercy is over all His works. But since God is just He cannot deal graciously with sinners while their guilt rests upon them. God must be just even when He justifies the ungodly.

Hence the Covenant of Redemption provides a Substitute for the guilty and so makes possible the exercise of grace in dealing with fallen and sin-cursed humanity. The Substitute which that covenant provided for sinners released them from the claims of divine justice by taking their place under the law, and suffering sin's penalty in their room and stead. And since divine justice was satisfied by the Just One on behalf of the unjust it was possible under the mediatorial system to deal graciously with sinners, to secure the temporary suspension at least of the consequences of sin which man had incurred under the Edenic covenant, and further to secure for him the benefit of the Altar with its bleeding victim to direct his thoughts to the Cross of Calvary, and to the Lamb of God Who in due time would make atonement for his sins, and not for his sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Thus, as the inspired psalmist declared, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other or are reconciled (in the Covenant of Redemption). Truth (the God-Man, born of a woman) shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven" (Ps. 85: 10, 11). Jesus, therefore, the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the earth (by covenant engagement) is the TRUTH because in Him as the Substitute died the souls of sinners; He also is the WAY of approach unto God and the LIFE which depends on fellowship with God because in Him the sinner not only dies unto sin, but also rises again to the new life of holiness, and because it is only through Him that that the banished can return unto God.

The gracious arrangement made possible by the Covenant of Redemption, by which man, after having justly incurred the penalty of sin, was permitted to live and to remain on the earth in covenant with God, also provided the Altar with its bleeding victim to be a constant reminder of the truth that without the shedding of blood there was no remission for sin. And to this altar all were to bring a lamb to be sacrificed as a substitute for the worshiper whose sins had earned for him death as the wages.

The Seed of the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman

As the result of this sacrificial requirement there appeared also the two seeds, the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. The latter seed was represented by the men of the altar; but against this divinely appointed provision the seed of the serpent quickly rebelled. Then also the two seeds began to contend with each other for possession of the earth and for dominion over it. This conflict continued until the seed of the woman was represented by only eight persons, while the serpent's seed prospered on the earth, built a great city, developed a splendid civilization, and was perfectly content to live without the altar. But the Flood came and all such persons were destroyed.

The Rainbow Covenant

The parties to the (4) or the Rainbow Covenant were Jehovah and Noah, his sons, and every living creature that had found refuge in the ark. Eight persons only had escaped the flood of mighty waters. This Covenant, like all the covenants succeeding the Covenant of Redemption, was ratified in time, but it was appointed to continue *for perpetual generations*. By this Covenant there was given to man for food every living creature and also every green herb. The shedding of human blood was absolutely forbidden under pain of death, but the requirement for the altar and its victim was continued. Unconditionally this Covenant guaranteed to all flesh that "while the earth remained, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night (eight great blessings in groups of two, for these eight new covenant beginners), should not cease." It was further promised that "all flesh should not again be cut off by the waters of a flood, and neither should the earth be destroyed any more by a flood."

The Rainbow Made the Seal

And as the seal of this perpetual covenant between God and all living creatures, and also the earth, God appointed the rainbow, and promised, "I will look upon it, that I may remember the ever or age-lasting Covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

However, the descendants of Noah forgot God, and instead of exalting and trusting in Him, they proposed to make a name for themselves by building, on a plain in the land of Shinar, a great city and a tower that would reach unto heaven, in which to put their trust, so that they would not be scattered abroad. Hence God confounded their language and scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth before they could complete their city, the name of which, therefore, was called Babel, or confusion, because God did there confound the language of all the earth. Later on the same site the ancient city of Babylon was built and called by the same name, the spelling of which is somewhat changed because of the difference of language.

The Abrahamic Covenant

The (5) was the Abrahamic Covenant. And the parties to this Covenant were Jehovah and Abraham. He had heard God's call to come out of Ur of the Chaldees and to go into Canaan, a land which Abram had never seen, but that God promised to show him. Under this Covenant there were promised to Abram at first that (a) God would make of him a great nation, (b) would bless him and make his name great, (c) that he should be a blessing, (d) that God would bless them that blessed him, (e) and curse them that cursed him, (f) that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed, and that (g) to his seed God would give the land of Canaan.

Then after Abram and Lot had separated there were added two other promises to this Covenant, (a) North, south, east, and west, as far as Abram could see in every direction all the land within his horizon God promised to give to him and to his seed forever (an age); also (b) God promised to make his seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then Abram's seed could be numbered. Thus the natural seed of Abram was to become an innumerable multitude.

Again, when Abram inquired concerning an heir, God gave him the promise that Isaac should be his heir. Then it was commanded him, "Look up now to heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and God said unto him, So shall

thy seed be. And Abram believed in Jehovah, and God counted it to him for righteousness." Thus Abram was promised not only a natural, but also a spiritual seed,—a seed to come because of his faith in Jehovah, and this seed also was to be innumerable.

At that time God gave the promise of enlarged boundaries that were to be given to Abram and his seed. He was assured (a) an earthly possession that would extend from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates, including the countries of ten nations; further, (b) his name was changed from Abram to Abraham because he was to become the father of many nations; God further promised, (c) to make him exceeding fruitful, (d) to make nations of him, (e) and that kings should come of him. And God declared (f) "I will establish My Covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations for an ever or age-lasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Then again, (g) God renewed the promise to give unto Abraham and to his seed the land of Canaan for an age-lasting possession, and to be their God.

Circumcision Was to be the Seal

The seal of this Covenant was to be circumcision in the flesh because its promises and blessings were intended for the natural and not for the spiritual seed of Abraham. Notice also, that there was no other condition required than the seal of circumcision in the flesh to assure to Abraham and to his seed the fulfilment to them in due time of the Abrahamic Covenant with all its advantages and benefits.

At a yet later time when Abraham in faith and obedience was ready to offer Isaac upon the altar this Covenant was confirmed to him by the oath of God Who declared, "By Myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand that is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemy; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice."

In so far as these great promises were to be realized in the experience of Abraham himself comparatively few of them have as yet been fulfilled. Some of the promises have been fulfilled in part in the experience of his natural seed, but for the greater part this oath-confirmed Covenant awaits the future for its fulfilment. And to Abraham it was revealed that he should die (Gen. 15:12, 15), without having received the promises. But he was further assured that God's Covenant with him would survive not only the four hundred years during which time it had been revealed to Abraham that his seed would be afflicted as strangers in a land that was not their's (vs. 13, 14), but also that not even the long night of death could annul that Covenant; because God (symbolized by the smoking furnace) (Ex. 19:18) would be with Abraham (symbolized by the burning lamp), (John 5:35), and thus assure the fulfilment of that Covenant in due time. And the day is speeding on, and is not now far distant when God will fulfil every promise made in that Covenant to the very letter.

The Sinaitic Covenant

(6) The Sinaitic Covenant. This Covenant was entered into between Jehovah and the nation of Israel in the third month after Israel had come out of the land of Egypt and had come to the wilderness of Sinai. The purpose of this Covenant was to serve as the constitution of the new-born nation which, not less than each person for himself, was required to enter into covenant relation with God as the condition of enjoying His favor and blessing. This Covenant contains what is commonly referred to in both the Old and New Testaments as "the law," or "the law of Moses." It consists of three parts each of which is essential to the other and the three combined constitute the one law in which is declared the will of God to govern national conduct; and behind this law there is the authority of the Triune God.

In the first division, and so at the very head of the national constitution, is the moral law, or Ten Commandments, which declare the righteous will of God in harmony with which every subject of the nation, and not less the legislators, jurists, and rulers are to regulate their conduct (Ex. 20:1-26).

In the second division of this law are found the judgments which declare the righteous will of God according to which the social life and conduct of the citizens of the nation must be determined and regulated in all their dealings one with another. And these judgments were to be enforced by the civil power with duly prescribed penalties (Ex. 21:1 to 24:11). The relation between the free and the bond, or between ruler and ruled, is defined by these judgments, and they set forth the rights of persons and of property; they also prohibit social crimes such as are commonly committed against the weak, and against strangers more freely than against others; they provide for a weekly Sabbath of rest; also for the year Sabbath to be observed after every six years in the interest of the poor, and they appoint three national feasts to be duly observed in remembrance of God's care over the nation, and in recognition of His gracious favors and blessings.

In the third and last division there are given the ordinances which declare the righteous will of God for the regulation of the religious life of the nation. And under these ordinances are found the statutes regarding the tabernacle, the priests that minister therein, and the worshipers (Ex. 24:12 to 31:18; Ps. 19:7-11).

Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal

And all the people as a nation were to subscribe to this law and covenant. Also, it was for the purpose of commemorating this law, embodied in the Sinaitic Covenant, that the nation was required, when it had passed over the Jordan and had come into possession of the land of Canaan, to set up two Memorial stones; the one stone on Mount Gerizim, and the other on Mount Ebal, and in the hearing of all the children of Israel both the blessings and the curses of the law were to be recited. Conditioned on national obedience to the Sinaitic Covenant God promised that that nation should be "a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:3-7). Disobedience to this Covenant was to bring the curses upon that nation. With that understanding the Covenant was duly ratified by that nation.

Nevertheless the history of that people both in the wilderness and in the land is one long record of the continual violation of that law and of disregard for covenant obligations. This resulted, first, in the rejection of the kingdom of Israel, and second, of the kingdom of Judah. In each case the rejection was followed by the captivities from which only the kingdom of Judah, after seventy years, returned to the land, and there remained until a few years after that people had crucified and finally rejected the Messiah Who had predicted that the Kingdom would be taken from them and given to a nation that would bring forth the fruits thereof.

The Davidic Covenant

The seventh (7) was the Davidic Covenant to which the parties were Jehovah and King David. And because David had purposed to build an house in which Jehovah was to dwell in the midst of the nation, therefore, while denying David permission to carry out his purpose, still God promised that after David's death He would raise up for him a Seed Who would carry out David's purpose to build an house for God. And concerning this promised Seed God gave the assurance, "I will establish *the throne of His Kingdom for ever* (*an age*)." But it was further promised to David, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever (an age) *before thee; thy throne shall be established forever* (*an age*)." Moreover the people of Israel were included in the blessings of this Covenant, for Jehovah promised, "I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, *and move no more: neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetimes*" (2 Sam. 7:1-16). There was no condition whatever attached to the fulfilment of this Covenant which God confirmed unto David with an oath (Ps. 89:1-4).

David fully understood that the promises contained in this Covenant were "for a great while to come" (2 Sam. 7:19), therefore they were not fulfilled by Solomon, the son and immediate successor of David on the throne. Aside from having raised up Christ, the promised Seed (Acts 2:25-31), God has not even to this day begun to fulfil these exceeding great and

precious promises to David and his house although behind this Covenant is the oath of the great Jehovah. Can any one who knows and believes in the mighty God of Jacob doubt for one moment that in the fullness of time these promises will all be literally fulfilled?

The New Covenant in Christ's Blood.

The eighth (8) is the New Covenant in Christ's Blood. This Covenant was not ready to be offered and could not be ratified by any one until after Christ's blood was shed on the Cross of Calvary. To this Covenant the parties are Jesus Christ and all who are willing to confess Him as their Lord and engage to serve Him.

Baptism Is the Seal

And of this Covenant baptism is the seal. The blessings it provides are (1) full and complete salvation from sin, its curse and penalty even to the uttermost, and the gift of God which is eternal life on the one condition of true faith in Jesus Christ; (2) the reward of glory to be conferred upon each true believer in just proportion to his works of faith and labor of love in the service of the divine Master; and then (3) to those willing to do all things whatsoever Christ has commanded and so measure up to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus the additional promise of this Covenant assures the indwelling and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

It is this New Covenant in Christ's blood that is brought to mind at every observance of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The broken bread serves as a symbol of the Crucified One; and the taking and eating of that bread bear witness to the faith that appropriates Christ so that we become one with Him in His death, resurrection and ascension, and also in His return in glory to reign in His Kingdom on the earth. The cup serves as a symbol, not merely of the shed blood, as so many appear to think, but rather and especially as Jesus explained, "The CUP is the NEW COVENANT in My blood shed for the remission of sins." And the taking and drinking of that Cup serve as a public testimony to covenant engagements; and bear witness to the faith that appropriates to

self all the benefits of that New Covenant. And as often as opportunity is present we are commanded to observe this Supper in remembrance of Christ until He come.

The Restored Land Covenant

The ninth (9) and last covenant, not in importance, nor yet in the time of its ratification, but in the time when it will become effective, is the Restored Land Covenant. The parties to this Covenant are Jehovah and the children of Israel. It was ratified in the land of Moab before that nation had come into possession of the promised land. Mention is made of the blessings already enjoyed by that nation, but there is also the prediction that all the curses of the Sinaitic Covenant are to be deserved and visited upon them because of national sins. This is all recorded in Deut. 29:1-29. Then, in Deut. 30:1-20, there is the further prediction that *after the blessing and the curse have both been experienced that then the nation will repent,* and return unto Jehovah their God, and obey with all their heart and soul all that God commanded them. Then God promised to turn their captivity, to have compassion upon them, *to gather them from all the nations whither He scattered them,* even though they have been driven to the uttermost parts of heaven, and *He will then bring them back to the land of their fathers;* they shall again possess it, and God will bless and multiply them more than their fathers, give them a circumcised heart, remove all the curses from them, and send these curses on their enemies, and under the favor of Jehovah they will be greatly blessed and prospered.

This Restored Land Covenant has not been fulfilled. But there is the Zionist movement and other signs that clearly indicate, to those at least who really believe *all* that the prophets have spoken, that the day is not very far distant when Israel as a nation will repent of its sins. Then, although still blindly rejecting their Messiah, that nation will return to its own land and to the worship of Jehovah the God of Israel according to all the forms and ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual. Then will follow the final testing of that people, according to the teachings of Scripture, to be followed by the Kingdom age when this Restored Land Covenant will become operative, and Je-

hovah Jesus will do for the Jews and for Israel according to all the promises of this covenant.

Sacred Numbers and the Covenants

It is interesting to note how the character of these nine covenants correspond to the significance of sacred numbers. The Restored Land Covenant as the ninth is significant of human imperfection and shortcoming. But if the first covenant be omitted since man was not a party to it, then the ninth becomes the eighth covenant between God and man, and eight is the number of new beginning.

The New Covenant in Christ's Blood as the eighth is significant of the new beginning made by those who have died unto sin and live unto righteousness, while as the seventh covenant, it is a reminder of the dispensational fulness and completion of the atoning sacrifice offered on Calvary.

The Davidic Covenant as the seventh reveals the fulness of dispensational blessings in store for David's Royal Seed, for David's house and for King David himself in the Kingdom age which will be the seventh dispensation; while as the sixth covenant it is a reminder of David's terrible sins of adultery and murder, which although graciously pardoned were at that time not to be forgotten, and so he was disqualified from building an house for the Holy One of Israel.

The Sinaitic as the sixth which is the number of evil and of Satan recalls how under the temptation of that old Serpent the Devil, Adam broke the first, the eighth, and the tenth commandments, and by his sin brought death and all our woe upon the race, while as the fifth covenant it is significant of the incompleteness and insufficiency of fallen humanity to satisfy the demands of a holy and righteous law which makes necessary, therefore, the work of the Redeemer Who delivers us from that law as a covenant of works.

The Abrahamic Covenant as the fifth suggests the weakness and insufficiency even of such a man as Abraham, the friend of God and the father of the faithful, always to withstand the tempter, while as the fourth, the number of the earth, it reminds of God's promise to give unto him and to his seed after him the whole land of Canaan.

The Rainbow Covenant as the fourth is significant of God's promise not again to destroy the earth with a flood of waters, while as the third covenant it recalls the fact that of all persons then on the earth Noah only was found righteous in the eyes of a holy God, and so the Trinity Father, Son, and Spirit could hold fellowship with him on the earth.

The Covenant of the Altar as the third suggests the work of the Triune God in bringing back the banished,—a work that required the Spirit to sanctify, or to set apart, the Son to pay the ransom price, and the Father to justify by the acceptance of His Beloved Son as the sinner's Substitute under the law, while as the second it is significant of the Covenant of Redemption in which God the Father and God the Son stand in covenant relation for man's sake.

The Edenic Covenant as the second at once suggests the necessity for the Covenant of Redemption to which the Father and the Son were parties, while as the first covenant with Adam, who was made in God's image and after His likeness, it is suggestive of the unity of the Godhead in the creation of man.

And behind and furnishing the foundation for all the other covenants stands the first great Covenant, the Covenant of Redemption, that signifies the unity of the Godhead in the divine purpose and plan to devise and to carry to completion whatever means were required to make possible the restoration of the banished, and the salvation of the lost race of humanity.

Such then are the several covenants. And to understand the teachings of Scripture it is absolutely necessary to distinguish between them, to learn the purpose of each covenant, the promises they contain, the conditions imposed, if there are any, and the penalty to be visited upon the covenant breakers.

The Parties to the Covenants Are Not to Be Confused

And surely it is not less important to clearly distinguish between those who are the parties to these several covenants. If these covenants and these parties were merely parts of ancient history, in which our only interest was to have an intelligent understanding of them, it would still be important even then to distinguish carefully between things that were wholly different.

The Covenants Are God's Word

But these covenants are not dead although some appear to think that they are. They are a part and a very important part of the living Word of God. Hence it is impossible to read the Bible intelligently, even more impossible to understand the prophecies of Scripture, apart from a discriminating knowledge of the several covenants.

Different Parties to Each of the Covenants

Three of the eight covenants to which our race or certain members of the human family are parties have seals. The Rainbow is the seal of God's Covenant with the mere earth-dwellers, or the unregenerate world today. This Covenant made with Noah and his sons includes the obligation which was placed upon the world in the Edenic Covenant of obedience to the will of the Creator; and it includes also the requirement found in the Covenant of the Altar that sin must be atoned for either by the sinner himself or by a Substitute acceptable to the Creator.

Circumcision in the flesh is the seal of the Abrahamic Covenant which includes the requirements imposed on men generally in the Rainbow Covenant. This covenant was supplemented later by the Sinaitic Covenant which requires national obedience to God's will, by the Restored Land Covenant with its promise of national restoration when that nation has found and accepted its Redeemer or Messiah, and by the Davidic Covenant which assures the nation that as God's earthly people David will be their king and reign over them in Jerusalem as his capital city.

Baptism is the seal of the New Covenant in Christ's Blood. This Covenant secures true Christians a release from all the obligations both of the Rainbow and also of the Abrahamic Covenants as conditions of blessings, and at the same time it assures them even greater blessings because the parties to it as joint-heirs with Christ will be inheritors of the earth and of all the fulness with which it is stored; they will also enter the joy of their Lord in that day when the Redeemer shall come to Zion and it shall be called, the City of Jehovah, the Zion (or Fortress) of the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 59:20; 60:14). Then also Zion, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted

above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it (Isa. 2:2), because all ends of the earth shall remember and shall turn unto the Lord.

All three of these covenants with seals which indicate that they are complete, appear in the Book of the Revelation and are easily recognized, while the Abrahamic Covenant is inseparably connected also with Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. To understand the prophecies, therefore, requires that the covenants and not less the parties also to each of these covenants shall be distinguished one from the other.

The Jews, the Gentiles and the Church

In the Bible these parties are always most carefully distinguished, and they are referred to intelligently. In the Old Testament the children of Israel are never confounded with the Gentiles. The tribe of Judah or the Jews everywhere preserve their tribal identity the same as do all and each of the other tribes although they are all children of Israel. And in the New Testament the same care is shown to preserve the distinction between the Church, the Jews, and the Gentiles: "Give none offense, neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God," writes the apostle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10:32). At times the Gentiles are called the nations, or as the same word is often translated, the heathen. They are also called the world or barbarians. But all persons mentioned in the Bible by any of these names belong to that world of unregenerate humanity that lieth in the evil one. This is the world of wicked men and seducers that wax worse and worse. All of these persons are parties to the Rainbow Covenant whether they so understand or are ignorant of the fact. Only the Jews and the Israelites are parties to the Abrahamic Covenant; and all professed Christians, whether sincere believers or mere hypocrites, are parties to the New Covenant in Christ's Blood.

Christians Classified in the Bible

But in the New Testament professed Christians are further distinguished from each other. They are classified in four different groups, (1) wicked servants (Lk 19:22; 1 Cor. 3:12-

15); (2) faithful servants, (Lk. 19:17, 18); (3) friends of the Bridegroom (John 3:29; 15:15; Lk. 14:10), and (4) the Bride of Christ or the Lamb's Wife (John 3:29; Rev. 21:2, 9; 27:17). All of these four groups are in the visible Church which is call the Body of Christ and of which He is the Saviour, while the last group only compose the True Church, or the Church in mystery of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 3:23; Rom. 12:3-8).

In the Body of Christ there are many members who differ in the measure of faith possessed, in gifts, in grace, in the position they hold in the Body whether more or less exalted and honorable (1 Cor. 12:12-31). But those in the group who compose the Bride class, the little flock, the Church in mystery are all and each equally endowed, and together they form a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish (Eph. 5:27, 32). Possibly the great mystery of which Paul speaks, (Eph. 5:30-32), is revealed by the apostle Peter when he mentions those who, under certain conditions, "might be partakers of the divine nature," (2 Pet. 1:4).

In the Parable of the Sower also (Matt. 13:18-23), Jesus describes four general classes among those who hear the word of the Kingdom. However among the wicked servants He gives three examples: "The way-side," "the stony-place," and "the thorny-ground" hearers are all wicked servants. But the fruit-bearing hearers are also of three different ranks: "some bear fruit an hundredfold (the Bride class); some sixtyfold (the friend of the Bridgegroom class); some thirtyfold (the faithful servant class)." Those who are saved by their faith and to all of whom, therefore, the door is open to receive a full reward (2 John 8; 1 Tim. 3:13), (for the reward of glory will be to every man as his work shall appear), will not all alike put forth the same effort, nor manifest the same love and devotion for the service, nor make equal sacrifices, nor attain like results for the glory of God. Hence, as one star differeth from another star in glory, so shall it be in the Resurrection. The Scriptures make it very plain that among the saved some will lose all reward of glory, others will receive but little, and only the few will receive the full reward, and obtain

the prize of "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." One should recognize this fact and carefully distinguish between Christians who differ in attainments, if the Bible is to be read intelligently and understandingly.

CHAPTER V

THE TIME ELEMENT IN PROPHECY

Different Methods of Reckoning Time.

There is yet one other rule to be observed, and its importance for the understanding of prophecy cannot be overestimated. This rule is that when the Abrahamic Covenant is suspended, because of the sins of the children of Israel, God ceases to reckon time until that Covenant is once again operative, and Israel is enjoying in some measure at least its blessings. It is absolutely essential to keep this rule in mind, and to apply the principle intelligently to certain prophecies or correct interpretation of them will be impossible. This same rule is further useful and necessary in order to harmonize Bible chronology with itself.

Some Claim Bible Chronology Is of no Value

By many expositors, Scripture chronology is considered hopelessly confused, and regarded as absolutely worthless in trying to fix the dates for given events. One writer of wide reputation for scholarship in his book on "The Introduction to Old Testament Literature," calls attention in said book to 1 Kings 6:1 which reads as follows:

> "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord."

That writer then parallels this Scripture with the statement made by Paul in his address at Antioch before his Jewish brethren (Acts 13:17-22). According to Paul's reckoning, after the children of Israel left Egypt,

> "God suffered their manners in the wilderness forty years; afterward He gave them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years; afterward God gave them Saul as king by the space of forty years."

Then there followed the forty years of David's reign, and to this must be added three years of Solomon's reign, because at the beginning of his fourth year he began to build the temple. The sum of these years makes five hundred and seventy-three years from the time Israel came out of Egypt until Solomon began to build the house of the Lord, instead of four hundred and eighty years, as recorded in the Book of Kings. Thus there is a difference of ninety-three years, and being unable to harmonize these Scriptures the writer of "The Introduction to Old Testament Literature" cut the Gordian knot by simply declaring Bible chronology to be worthless. And such is the opinion of many expositors.

Israel Sold Into Hands of Enemies

This seeming discrepancy can be satisfactorily explained, and it can be shown that it is not a discrepancy at all, but rather a different method of reckoning time. In the Book of the Judges there are recorded five occasions when the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. On these occasions their sins were so great that the anger of the Lord was hot against His people Israel, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies who greatly oppressed them. Thus Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years (ch. 3:8); Eglon, king of Moab, eighteen years (ch. 3:14); Jabim twenty years (ch. 4:3); the Midianites seven years (ch. 6:1), and the Philistines forty years (ch. 13:1). The sum of these years of captivity and oppression total exactly ninety-three years, or the difference between four hundred and eighty years and five hundred and seventy-three years. In Judges 10:7, 8, mention is made of the Lord selling Israel into the hands of the Philistines, *and into the hands of the children of Ammon.* Then follows the account of eighteen years during which the children of Ammon greatly oppressed Israel; and the record declared that at the end of that time God delivered His people out of the hands of the children of Ammon by His servant Jephthah. But not one

word is written concerning the Philistine bondage until the 13th chapter, and there it is said, God's people were afflicted by the Philistines for forty years, as stated above. Hence it is only reasonable to conclude, that the eighteen years of oppression by the Ammonites (recorded in ch. 10), are synchronous with the first eighteen of the forty years during which Israel was afflicted by the Philistines.

God Does Not Reckon Time While Israel Is in the Hands of Enemies.

The means, therefore, of reconciling this seeming discrepancy of ninety-three years, suggests the principle or rule that whenever, on account of their sins, the children of Israel are denied the protection and blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant and delivered up to the oppression of their enemies; that all such time, being lost to Israel under the Covenant, is not reckoned or counted by God at all. But God waits until His people Israel are again in covenant relation with Him as their Protector, Benefactor, and Friend, and then again He reckons time. Hence, in Scripture there are two entirely different methods used to register the flight of time: (1) Solar time as commonly reckoned by the number of days, weeks, and years. This was the method that God appointed for man (Gen. 1:14), and that Paul uses (Acts 13:17-22). (2) Covenant time, reckoned only while Israel enjoys in their own land the blessings and protection of the Abrahamic Covenant. This is God's method of reckoning time, and the method used by His servants the prophets.

This Method Used by Daniel the Prophet

This rule may be tested on Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, or literally, Seventy of Sevens (years) (ch. 9:24-27). The Jews had not only a week of seven days, but also a week of seven years, and seven of these year-weeks or forty-nine years led up to the Jubilee which was celebrated in the fiftieth year (Lev. 25:8-10). It is evident that Daniel's Seventy of Sevens refer not to the day-week, but rather to the year-week because,

as the context shows, the prophet was inquiring concerning the number, not of the days, but of the years of the captivity (ch. 9:2), and seventy of those year-weeks make a total of four hundred and ninety years.

Abrahamic Covenant to Be Fulfilled in Four Hundred and Ninety Years

Within that period, four hundred and ninety years, the angel Gabriel informed the greatly beloved prophet that the chastisement of Daniel's people would end. They were then to be established in age lasting righteousness, the prophecy concerning them would be finished, or sealed (Heb. Chatham), and the Most Holy One, David's Royal Son the Messiah, would be anointed,—evidently as King.

From the Decree to Build Jerusalem, to Rejection of Messiah Would Be Four Hundred and Eighty-three Years

Further, God's immediate messenger, Gabriel, declared, "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven of sevens (forty-nine years), and three score and two seven of sevens (four hundred and thirty-four years). This only accounts for sixty-nine of the seventy year-weeks, a period of four hundred and eighty-three years. Thus one, the last year-week, or seven years, is still to be accounted for. However, regarding the seven of sevens, or forty-nine years, the angel explains, "The street (of Jerusalem) shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times." Thus forty-nine years are here allowed in which to restore and to build Jerusalem. As to the remaining sevens included in the reckoning the angel declared, "After the three score and two seven of sevens shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself," or literally, "and nothing for Him." In other words, four hundred and thirty-four years after Jerusalem had been rebuilt, or four hundred and eighty-three years after the decree to build Jerusalem, it was predicted that the Jewish Messiah, Christ our Lord, would

be cut off and there would be nothing for Him: that is, He would be wholly rejected.

Only One Decree to Build Jerusalem

There were three decrees with reference to the house of the Lord God of Israel: (1) that of Cyrus who decreed the restoration of the house, (2) that of Darius who confirmed the decree of Cyrus, and (3) that of Artaxerxes who decreed, in his seventh year, the restoration of the worship and the embellishment of the house of God. Not one of those decrees directed or permitted the rebuilding of the city. But in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes that monarch decreed the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:1-8), and as near as the date can be fixed that decree went forth about B. C. 444 (Hales, Jahn). As generally understood also, Christ was crucified A. D. 33. Thus in 477 (444 plus 33) years after the decree to restore Jerusalem Messiah was crucified. Then, after his resurrection and ascension, the Jewish nation, which Peter charged with having killed the Messiah through ignorance (Acts 3:15-17), was given every opportunity for several years to repent of its sin. Many Jews did repent and accepted Christ, but the nation persisted in its rejection of Him and made it plainly evident that the final decision of the nation would be, even as Jesus had predicted in His parable (Lk. 19:14), "We will not have this man to reign over us." That decision showed conclusively that, in so far as it was in the power of that nation to cut Him off and to deprive Him of His own, Messiah should have nothing of what was rightly His. Thus the time of opportunity given to that nation to repent, after they had killed the Prince of Life, will easily account for the remaining six of the four hundred and eighty-three (477 plus 6) years. In fact there need not be any doubt that, if the chronologist were only able to determine and to establish the correct date for the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, and the date also when the Jews as a nation finally decided to wholly reject the claims of Christ as their Messiah, and to withhold from Him all recognition, honor, and even respect, the intervening time would be found to be exactly four hundred and eighty-three years to the very day even as the Angel Gabriel informed the prophet that it would be.

Abrahamic Covenant Suspended

Having therefore persisted in the refusal to repent of their great wickedness, and having invited the curse of the blood of Christ to be on them and on their children, the representatives of Jewry were taken at their word. God's covenant with that nation was then suspended, and the people were delivered into the hands of their enemies. As Paul said to that people, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of age-lasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

Thus covenant or prophetic time ceased to register. The God in Whose eyes a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is passed, or as a watch in the night, has ever since ignored the flight of time and will so continue to do until He begins to deal again with Israel in their own land under the Abrahamic Covenant. When that time comes then the last one of the Seventy of Sevens, or the remaining seven years required to complete the four hundred and ninety years of Daniel's prophecy, will begin to be reckoned; and then all the prophecies concerning Israel and Judah will hasten to their speedy consummation. That will be at "the time of the end," or "the end of the years," or "the latter days," so frequently mentioned by the prophets to indicate that all intervening time is disregarded. The last seven years of Jewish history during this age will probably date from the appearing of Antichrist, the coming world emperor, on the stage of Gentile history. And it is to that time that the remaining part of Daniel's prophecy, with a single exception, looks forward.

People of the Prince to Destroy the City

The angel informs Daniel, "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary," It is not the prince who shall destroy the city, but *the people of the coming prince,—they* shall destroy the city, etc. This prediction was fulfilled in A. D. 70 by Titus and the Roman army, and that is the only event of history that has occurred, during all the centuries that have passed since the suspension of the

Abrahamic Covenant, of which any notice is taken in this or in any other prophecy of the Bible. Time is absolutely ignored and will continue to be ignored in prophecy until the last seven years under the Abrahamic Covenant begin to be fulfilled, and then also "the coming prince," the Antichrist, will make his appearance.

The Covenant Between Israel and Antichrist

The remaining part of this prophecy therefore is unfulfilled. It awaits the future for its fulfilment and it records the conduct and final chastisement of the nation of Israel in the last seven years of its history, during this present age, under the reign of the Antichrist. It declares, "And the end thereof, etc." What end? Obviously, the end of the four hundred and ninety years of Jewish history under the Abrahamic Covenant of which end-time there still remain seven years to completion. That end, "shall be with a flood (for all earth dwellers), and unto the end of the war (for the crown rights and royal prerogatives of Messiah), desolations (divine judgments followed by the great tribulation and the Day of the Lord) are determined. And he (the Antichrist, the prince that shall come, whose people destroyed Jerusalem in A. D. 70) shall make a firm covenant with many (of Daniel's people)" (Isa. 28:15-23; John 5:43), for one of the sevens, or seven years; and in the midst of the sevens (seven years), or after three and a half years, he (the Antichrist, the abomination of desolations (Matt. 24:15), shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease (Israel will have returned at that time to their own land in their unbelief, and will have restored their ancient worship); and upon the wings (the authority) of abomination shall one come (an officer of the Antichrist) that maketh desolate: and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate (the Jews), or the desolator (the Antichrist).

God's Time Method Used by Isaiah

This ignoring of time while the covenant with Israel is suspended finds illustration in many of the prophecies, notably Isaiah, 61st chapter of which Jesus, in the synagogue at Naza-

reth (Lk. 4:16-21), suspended the reading at a comma in the middle of verse 2nd, and having read only that much, "He closed the book, saying, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." What explanation is there for this? The reason is that the First Advent brought in the acceptable year of the Lord. Jesus proclaimed it as present then, but that acceptable year ended for the Jewish nation when their covenant was suspended. In what follows the prophet Isaiah ignores the intervening time and so announces, The day of vengeance, that is even yet future and that will immediately precede the Second Advent, and also the blessings and comforts for Israel that will only be theirs in the Kingdom age.

The failure to recognize and to apply this rule has resulted in false and often absurd interpretations of many Scriptures, especially the prophecies, which are frequently explained by the so-called method of "spiritual interpretation,"—a method that merely substitutes human theories for divine truth thus making void the Word of God, leading to confusion of thought and the contradiction of much truth really taught in the Scriptures for our learning.

In the Old Testament All Events Are Dated

While in predicting events such as were related to Israel's history "in the latter days," the Old Testament prophets entirely disregarded the time element during all the interim between the First and Second Advents, because it was lost time to Israel under their covenant; on the other hand the Old Testament historians were very careful to record the date of each event with comparatively few exceptions. And the exceptions, when the events were not dated, follow the account of some great sin which had displeased God and had called forth divine judgments. Hence it is probable that God's covenant with those thus guilty had been likewise suspended. Read for example just before the Flood, Gen. 5:32; 6:6-10; also after the building of Babel, Gen. 11:26, 27. Then note the contrast with Gen. 5:4-31; 11:1-25. In the former Scriptures the time element is ignored, while in the latter it is carefully noted. By allowing for such lost time in the calculation, a biblical chronology can be supplied that will be in agreement with the com-

paratively few verified dates furnished by secular historians and chronologists.

God's Cycles Seventy Times Seven, Times Four

Further, the biblical chronology thus supplied suggests at least that God is working out His plans for the redemption of the race, and for the establishment of His Kingdom on the earth, according to ordered and definite cycles of time, each of which cycles is the product of seventy times seven (the sacred number for perfection), times four (the earth number), or a total of nineteen hundred and sixty years of covenant time for each cycle.

In the first cycle God's plan included the world or the entire race of mankind. In the second cycle His plan included only the seed of Abraham; and in the third and last cycle before the Kingdom age. God's plan includes the Church, the Body of Christ, into which is to be brought the fulness of the Gentiles, Rom. 11:25, who are fellow heirs with the Jews (Eph. 3:6), but in which neither Jew nor Gentile as such has any recognition, but Christ is to be all and in all (Col. 3:11). Thus from Adam to Abram there were nineteen hundred and sixty years of covenant time. From Abram to the birth of Christ there were also nineteen hundred and sixty years of covenant time. And from the birth of Christ to the Kingdom age there would be a like number of years of covenant time. Allowing for lost time these cycles will cover about six thousand years of solar time, and the thousand years of the Kingdom age will make seven thousand years and so complete the dispensation of God's dealings with the human family as sinners, or as a fallen race.

The Seals of the Three Great Covenants

Each of these cycles represents also a covenant which has been sealed, thus indicating that it was to be called forth as evidence only at a time in the distant future (Jer. 32:14; Dan. 12:9, Rev. 5:1). The first cycle represents the world covenant made originally with Adam after his fall, and later merged into the Rainbow Covenant established with Noah and his seed together with all living creatures; and the bow in the cloud is the

seal of that Covenant. The second was the Abrahamic Covenant which was later supplemented by the Sinaitic and the Davidic Covenants; and of this Covenant circumcision in the flesh is the seal. Then the third cycle represents the New Covenant in Christ's blood of which baptism is the seal. All the blessings provided were conditioned, in the first two covenants, on obedience to the will of God and the due observance of the requirements of the Altar at which must be learned the necessity of sin being atoned for by the shedding of blood. Hence they were both covenants of works. All the blessings promised in the New Covenant in Christ's blood depend merely on faith in Christ, on His perfect obedience, and on His death as the sinner's Substitute. In all respects, therefore, it is a covenant of grace. Under the first covenant the Gentile nations, or the unregenerate world, will be judged; under the second covenant will be judged the natural seed of Abraham, the whole house of Israel, and under the third covenant, the Visible Church of Christ will be judged.

These Covenants Are Given Prominence in the Bible

The Bible, never for a moment, loses sight of these three covenants, nor of the different groups of persons who, under the several covenants, are accountable to God. In the seven epistles of the Book of the Revelation, the judgment of the Visible Church, under the New Covenant in Christ's blood, is going on during this present evil age, and the distinction between the true disciple and the mere professor is shown in those epistles. In connection with the opening of the first four seals attention is directed to Gentile nations that are being judged today under the Rainbow Covenant, and it is easy to understand why their conduct will bring divine judgments, such as are described under the first six bowls of God's wrath, upon the world; and in connection with the opening of the next two seals and the sounding of the first six trumpets there are predicted the judgments that will be visited upon unbelieving Israel who are to be judged under the Abrahamic Covenant. Then the final judgment during this present evil age of all covenant-breakers, both mere Christian professors and avowed infidels, both Jew and Gentile, will be completed with the opening of the seventh

seal, the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the seventh bowl. The seven bowl judgments are the last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God (Rev. 15:1). To this extent, and directing to such conclusions is the importance of the time element that is given such great prominence in the Old Testament.

The New Testament a Dateless Book

In very marked contrast with the care shown by Old Testament historians to fix and record the date of each event, the New Testament appears as a practically dateless book even as regards the most important historic facts. If we would inquire concerning the time of Christ's birth, or of other important events connected with His life and ministry on earth; or if we would learn the exact time even of His crucifixion, or resurrection, or ascension, the Bible affords but little help. If we desire to know just when the New Testament Church was substituted in the plan of God for the Kingdom that had been promised as "nigh at hand" (Lk. 21:31), even in the days of Christ's earthly ministry; or if we would know when the twelve apostles were first chosen and sent forth on their mission, or when Paul was converted and called to the apostleship, and the date from which to reckon his several missionary journeys and the time required for him to complete each; if we would ascertain the year in which any of the apostles died, or how long they lived to serve the Church, or when the four Gospels or the several epistles were written, and other not less interesting and important facts, we at once discover that the time element has been practically ignored in the New Testament, and that the few details supplied on any subject in Scripture afford nothing more than a mere hint regarding the date of these several events.

And when we turn to other than biblical sources for the desired information it is found that we have entered a field only of speculation and controversy, because there are absolutely no verified dates on any of these historic events that authorities can furnish, and there is, therefore much disagreement regarding even probable dates. From this fact, the most reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that by giving Bible students a date-

less New Testament God has purposed to emphasize the truth that He takes no account of time while His covenant with Israel is suspended.

The Secret of the Lord Is with Them that Fear Him

Thus God enables those who fear Him, by further search and inquiry under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discover the secret (Ps. 25:14), and to apply it for the better understanding of the "sure word of prophecy" as it stands related to His covenant with faithful Abraham (Jer. 33:23-26). For many years Christian scholars, whose names are household words in multitudes of homes, have possessed and applied this rule in explaining the Scriptures; they have called attention to it in their books also and in addresses delivered from the public platform. Hence it is not some new fad, nor a mere unsupported theory of a few extremists to which it is necessary to give but little heed. Rather it is a necessary rule for the correct interpretation and understanding of prophecy. It is a rule that is admitted and indorsed by men of recognized scholarship in the Church,—men who are peers of any gospel minister, Christian leaders who are well reputed as able and sound expositors of the Word of God, and it is the utter disregard of this rule that has made prophecy a sealed book today to the larger part of the lay members of the Church and even to the ministers and professors in pulpits and in Christian colleges and seminaries.

This rule must be applied by all those who desire an understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and of the Book of the Revelation. And the meaning of many other prophecies of the Scriptures lies hidden also until the intelligent application of this important rule clears up most of the difficulties and makes it possible to read these portions of the Bible understandingly and with profit.

Chapter VI

KINGDOM LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The Present Great Crisis

Amidst such social, religion, political, national and international conditions as prevail today throughout the world, all thoughtful persons realize that a crisis is drawing near. Some do not hesitate to declare that a remedy for present conditions must be found and applied quickly or civilization is doomed to perish before the rising spirit of anarchy which defies law, despises authority, casts aside all restraints, tramples under foot the most revered customs of society and venerated institutions and like a mighty flood threatens to overwhelm and to destroy everything in its pathway.

Remedies for present conditions have been suggested by many in the past; others are still being advocated, and some are now being tried, but any change for the better is not to be discerned except by a few blind optimists. Many have become greatly discouraged, and alarm is spreading among intelligent people everywhere. What can be done? What does the present state of the world and of society in general permit one to hope for tomorrow? Such questions are being asked, and for the greater part the answers given to them are mere guesswork and unsatisfying. The final answer must rest upon the sure foundation of the Word of God to Whom the end is known from the beginning, Who has in His Word forewarned of the very conditions that now prevail, and Who has predicted the outcome for the understanding and comfort of all who believe and who put their trust in Him.

The Mystery of the Kingdom

In turning to the Bible for light in the darkness and for the explanation and solution of present day problems, it is well to

begin with the revelation Jesus Himself gave to His true friends and followers. It will be remembered, how to the great multitudes that gathered together to hear him, Jesus spake to them many things in parables, and for the greater part these parables contained the truth that Jesus taught concerning His Kingdom. When asked by His disciples why He spake unto the multitudes in parables? He said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:11). And why was the privilege of understanding this truth not given to the multitudes? Simply because, their heart was waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing, their eyes they had closed, because they had deliberately chosen not to perceive, or to hear, or to understand lest they should be turned to Christ and He should heal them (Matt. 13:12-15). As free moral agents the multitudes were at liberty to make their own choice; and they alone were responsible for the results. That same principle holds true today, and it is the best explanation of why the vast multitudes of earth's inhabitants are still groping in darkness. They have but little if any understanding of what God hath revealed for our learning because they have chosen not to know; they have decided that they have no interest in these things and they will not spare the time from their business and pleasures to consider them.

Jesus Explains the Mysteries

But Jesus desired that His true friends should understand His teachings. So in private He explained two of His parables to His disciples, and thus laid down the principles for their interpretation so that all who truly desired to learn of Him might know the truth. Read then the interpretation Jesus has given of the parable of the Sower and decide for yourselves to which class you belong of those who are privileged to hear the word of the Kingdom.

Several Classes of Hearers

Are you a wayside hearer, or one who has no understanding of Kingdom truth, to whom the Evil one cometh and snatcheth

away that which has been sown in his heart? Are you a rocky ground hearer who at first receives the message with joy, but being without faith, which is the root of all revealed truth, will choose to abandon the teaching of Jesus Christ rather than to endure even ridicule and much less tribulation or persecution because of the truth? Are you a thorny ground hearer, or one who is far more concerned about the care of his body than about the salvation of his soul, and who is more interested in what he shall eat, drink and wear in this present time than in what he is in character and in what are his future possibilities? If you belong to any of these classes of hearers then be on your guard, or the cares of this present age and the deceitfulness of riches, like rank weeds, will spring up in your heart to choke the word of divine truth and cause you to become unfruitful. Are you a good ground hearer or one who receives the word of the Kingdom and understands it and believes it, and who verily beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty (Matt. 13:19-23)? If so then thank God Who has hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed the precious truth unto mere babes (Matt. 11:25). To which class of hearers do you belong, or do you choose to belong? Answer that question to yourself truthfully and you can decide right here and now whether the study of God's Word will enable you to walk in the light of revealed truth or leave you with the multitude to stumble along in the darkness of error, ignorance, and superstition.

Earnest Seekers After Truth Will Find It

If willing to learn the truth concerning the Kingdom, and if you really desire to become a fruitful hearer, then consider carefully and attentively the explanation given by the Great Teacher Himself, even our Lord Jesus Christ, of His parable in which He likened the Kingdom of heaven unto a man that sowed good seed in his field (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43). Jesus explained that the field, to which He likened the Kingdom of heaven, was the world, the cosmos, or this material and habitable earth on which man today lives, moves and has his being. And since the field is the earth, or habitable world, the Kingdom certainly is not the Church of which the members are said to be

"heirs of the Kingdom" (Jas. 2:5). There is certainly a difference to be made between an inheritor and an inheritance if words mean anything intelligible. And if we desire to understand Christ's teachings on the subject of His Kingdom, we must learn to read His word intelligently and thoughtfully so that we will distinguish between things that are entirely different such as the Kingdom and the Church. It was the Kingdom, and not the Church, which Jesus likened unto the field that He explained was the world, or this material earth. Further, He declared that He Himself was the Man who sowed the good seed in His field; and that the good seed represented His sons, or His children, who constitute the Church and who become, not the Kingdom, but rather the heirs of the Kingdom (Lk. 12:32; Rom. 8:17). The tares are not the sons of God, but rather they are the children of the Evil one; and the enemy that sowed them in the field is the Devil. Now if we understand the teachings of Jesus thus far and are willing to accept them as the truth, then we will believe in a personal spirit of evil who is that old serpent the Devil. Then further, we will know and believe that the Devil has his children living here on earth, and that they are no more the children of God than the tares are the good seed, or than the Devil is the Son of Man.

Blind Leaders of the Blind

It should not be necessary to emphasize such self-evident truth, but unfortunately it is necessary for there are many today, in fact multitudes even among the ministers of the gospel, who read the Bible unthinkingly, who use its teachings unintelligently, who preach their own theories rather than the truth of God's Word, and who, therefore, loudly proclaim that all men are the children of the Heavenly Father,—even those whom Christ describes as the children of the Devil. And such preaching, which on the one hand will please that old deceiver the Devil, and on the other hand greatly grieve the Holy Spirit, is quite acceptable, and in general agreeable to the understanding of a great multitude of professed Christians today concerning what is taught in the Word of God. Verily, if the light that is in such preachers be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Wheat and Tares to Mingle Until the End of the Age

However, Jesus teaches that in His field, or world Kingdom, there are to be found, for the present, both God's children and also the children of the Devil. And He reveals that it is His will that both the sons of the Kingdom and the sons of the evil one shall continue to dwell on the earth until the time of the harvest. He explains the harvest to mean the end of the age, and not the end of the world (see margin or footnote in the Revised version of the Bible). At that time,—the end of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4), Jesus will send forth the reapers (His angels), and they will gather out the tares together with all things that offend and burn them with fire. Then also the righteous, or the true Church of Christ, will be manifested (Rom. 8:19; 1 John 2:19), and will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Here then is the explanation given by Jesus Himself of this parable. His interpretation is so plain that even the way faring man, and much more the scholar, need not miss the meaning, nor be deceived regarding the same if he loves the truth of God more than he loves some theory of man.

The Understanding of Kingdom Truth Is the Key that Unlocks the Scriptures

Jesus was very anxious that His friends should understand His teachings concerning Kingdom truths. He therefore inquired of them, Have ye understood all these things? And when they declared they did understand, Jesus replied, "Therefore, every scribe, or teacher, who is instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old" (Matt. 13:51, 52). That certainly can mean nothing less than that the understanding of Kingdom truth is the KEY to the understanding of the Scriptures. He therefore who understands this teaching of Jesus Christ concerning His Kingdom, will be able to bring forth, out of the treasures of truth contained in God's Word, things both new and old. The Spirit of God will not lead any one into all truth who resists Him and refuses to be led into the knowledge and understand-

ing of the truth concerning the Kingdom as it has been revealed in the Bible for our learning by Jesus Himself.

Jesus to Reign as King on the Earth

Let it be kept in mind that in this parable Jesus is teaching about the Kingdom of heaven and not about the Church. He likens the Kingdom not unto the Church but unto a field,—His field, and He explains that the field is the world, or this material, habitable earth. This world belongs to Him; it is the territory of His dominion over which and on which Jesus is to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, and it will be on this earth that every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, or King, to the glory of God the Father.

The Old and New Testament Revelation in Agreement

Such knowledge and understanding of the Kingdom agrees with what is everywhere taught in the Bible on this subject. Read the promise of God the Father, given to His Only Begotten Son, as recorded in the 2nd Psalm, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." This also is the only understanding of the Kingdom that harmonizes with Jewish expectation with regard to their Messiah,—an expectation that was fully justified as may be learned from the entire Old Testament, and especially from the 72nd Psalm the teaching of which has been summed up in the familiar lines:

"Christ shall have dominion
Over land and sea;
Earth's remotest regions
Shall His empire be."

Jesus never once corrected the Jews for holding the belief that their Messiah was to be a King Who would reign in an earthly Kingdom. He did chide them for not believing ALL that their prophets had spoken, namely, that He must first suffer and enter into His glory before He could come in His glory to fulfil their expectation. Some care but little for Old Testament teaching, but none-the-less it is the Word of God, and it agrees perfectly with what is revealed in the New Testament

on the subject of the Kingdom. Read the prediction made by the angel Gabriel to the Mother of Jesus just before His birth when He was laid in the lowly manger of Bethlehem. The angel declared, "That Holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob," or over the unbelieving and rebellious Israelites (Lk. 1:32). Then run down the page of prophecy until the time when this prediction will be declared fulfilled, and hear the great voices in heaven proclaiming, "The kingdoms of this world, this habitable earth, are become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Anointed one (the true Church), and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

Born to Be a King

When Pilate asked Jesus the direct question, Art Thou then a King? Jesus explained that He was not to receive His Kingdom from the world, or as the gift of men, but He nevertheless declared boldly, "I am a King; for this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the (this) truth" (John 18:37). And it was because of this very testimony that Pilate prepared the inscription for the Cross in Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Jesus Offered His Kingdom by Satan

Although many of Christ's friends today fail to understand that His Kingdom is to be set up on this earth, the Devil at least did not misunderstand the nature of the Kingdom nor the fact that it was to be established on this earth over which, for the present, Satan reigns as prince (John 14:30), and is worshiped by multitudes as the god of the age (2 Cor. 4:4). Hence it is recorded the Devil took Jesus into a high mountain and showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the earth; and we learn how Satan tempted Christ saying, "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it."

One can easily imagine the Devil saying to Jesus, "You are

a King; you have come into this world to possess yourself of all these kingdoms with their glory, honor and riches. Now you do not need to live here on this earth in humility, hoping and waiting for some future time when you will get possession of the earth and reign over it. You do not have to pass through Gethsemane submitting to its anguish and bloody sweat; and much less is it necessary that you should endure Calvary with all its shame, suffering and cruel death. All that is entirely unnecessary. If Thou wilt but worship me, ALL shall be Thine" (Lk. 4:5-7). Jesus rejected the gift on those terms; He chose to wait, at any and every cost, until it was the Father's good pleasure to give Him possession of the earth unto its utmost bounds. Such then is the Kingdom for the coming of which Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth even as in heaven."

Walking by Faith, Not by Sight

Will the Lord's prayer be answered agreeable to the desire of the suppliants? Every true Christian believes it will be so answered, and hence they continue to pray in faith nothing doubting. Some however are looking for signs of the coming Kingdom. They see evil that is all around them in the world and even in the Church, but very little to even suggest that the Kingdom is coming. They ask therefore, "Who will show us any good?" They grow weary with waiting. Some yield to discouragement and become scoffers, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were."

Others today close their eyes to the evil and magnify the good which they profess to discover. They think they see signs to indicate the coming of the Kingdom in the heart, in the home, in the Church, in the community, in the nation, and in the world. And as the best means for keeping hope alive they seek to persuade and encourage others also to see things so that they also may walk by sight rather than by faith.

But believing the teachings of Jesus there are Christians who are not looking for signs. They know the Kingdom will not come with observation, or in other words, it will not come gradually, or by degrees, so that its coming can be discerned,

for Jesus has so declared (Lk. 17:20-24). No, the Kingdom is coming with the suddenness of lightning that in a moment sweeps from one end of heaven to the other. As in the days of Noah, or as in the days of Lot, the Gentile nations will continue as today to eat, drink, buy, sell, plant, build, to marry wives and to be given in marriage, without a single thought of anything more important than themselves, their possessions, their pleasures, and thus it will be down to the very moment for the setting up on this earth of God's Kingdom. Then there will come terrible divine judgments, and after these things the Kingdom will be established.

God's Controversy with the Nations to Be Settled

The divine judgments that are predicted to smite the image of Nebuchadnezzar and to destroy all earthly rule and empire must come before the setting up of God's Kingdom, and these judgments will come suddenly and without warning upon earth's inhabitants. These judgments will be God's "strange work, and His strange act" (Isa. 28:21, 22). As a result, this earth will be wasted and made desolate with fires and storms such as have never before been witnessed by men. And on the utter ruin of world empire that will perish under the wrath of a just and righteous God, the Kingdom of God's dear Son will be set up and established.

> "Our God shall surely come;
> Keep silence shall not He;
> Before Him fires shall waste,
> Great storms shall round about him be
> Before He comes;
> To judge the world comes He" (Ps. 50:3-6).

God has a controversy with the nations of this earth, because they have forgotten the God Who has made and preserved them as nations; they have also rejected His Son, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us"; they are trampling under their feet, at their own pleasure, the righteous will of God whenever it conflicts with their wills, and they refuse to submit to God's authority (Jer. 25:31).

The Day of the Lord, or Lord's Day

That controversy will be settled finally in "the Day of the Lord," or in "the day of the vengeance of our God." It is not pleasant to think about that great and terrible Day, but it may be profitable to some who are neglecting today their opportunity to make their peace with God. "Men are but children of a larger growth," and as the rod of correction is appointed for the wilful child, so divine judgments are appointed for wicked and impenitent men and women and nations. These terrible judgments that are coming on the earth are to be sent forth by God for the salvation of multitudes who have hardened their hearts against the gospel message. Hence in His great mercy God purposes to reach and to save them by other means. And He will not fail; for "when God's judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). Favors shown to the wicked only incline them to further harden their hearts, as did Pharaoh, but divine judgments will bring them to their knees with a cry for mercy and pardon.

The Terror of the Day of the Lord

Hence "the Day of the Lord" is coming when "the wicked and ungodly shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:12-22). The old prophets predicted the coming of the Day of the Lord, and they uniformly declare that it will be "a day of vengeance and recompense" (Isa. 34:8), "of darkness and gloominess" (Joel 2:1-11), "of mourning and lamentation" (Amos 8:9, 10), "of trouble and distress," "of wasteness and desolation" (Zeph. 1:14-18), "of earthquake and fire" (Zech. 14:1-7), "of fire and burning" (Mal. 4:1-6). The apostles mention it as "a day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgments of God" (Rom. 2:5), "of weeping and howling" (Jas. 5:1-8), and, more than any other inspired writer, the beloved disciple, the apostle of love, furnishes a detailed description of that Day of divine wrath in the Book of the Revelation. Even Jesus Himself warns of that time as "the days of ven-

geance when all things that are written shall be fulfilled," and when "men's hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Lk. 21:20-28; Matt. 24:15-28; Mk. 13:14-26).

That Day Has no Terror for the Godly

But while that day will bring tribulation and anguish upon all the wicked and ungodly of earth it has no fear nor terror for the righteous, because not a hair of their heads shall perish. When these things begin to come to pass they are encouraged to look up, and to lift up their heads; for their redemption draweth nigh (Lk. 21:18, 19, 28).

No Man Knoweth the Time

It is known that only after these terrible judgments, with the coming of which this present evil age will end, that the Kingdom of God will be established. However it would be only guess-work to presume to predict the exact time when this present age will end and when the Kingdom age will begin, or when Gentile dominion over the earth shall cease, and when Christ shall take to Himself His great power and reign on the earth (Rev. 11:17; 5:10). "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only," declared Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:26). That word should put an end to all speculation and guess-work. We cannot know either the day or the hour. But of one thing we can be certain, and that is, that *right now* we are living near the end of this present evil age, and that the dawn of the Kingdom age is not far off, but rather *it is even now at the very door.*

Chapter VII

THE PROPHECY OF GENTILE DOMINION

Knowledge of the Future Rests on the Sure Word of Prophecy

The justification for the assurance that the end of this age draws very near rests on two prophecies of Scripture, one in the Old Testament and the other in the New. And it can be easily shown that both of these prophecies are nearing complete fulfilment. There is then first, The prophecy that declares the beginning, and that predicts the ending of Gentile world power during this age. Let it be kept in mind that the present is declared in Scripture to be "The times of the Gentiles."

Attempts to Destroy Faith in Daniel's Predictions

From the prophecy of Daniel we learn just when "the times of the Gentiles" began; also how these times will end, and further that the time of the end is not far distant. The modernists or liberal theologians, as they choose to style themselves, have tried by every means at their command to discredit the Book of Daniel. But in plain English, according to any Standard dictionary of the English language, the so-called modernists are infidels and destructive critics. They proclaim themselves Christians, while at the same time they are boring from within the church, and by every possible effort doing all in their power to weaken and to undermine faith in the Bible, in the deity of Jesus Christ, and in all other fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion.

No book of the Bible has been more fiercely assailed nor more valiantly defended in recent times than has the Book of Daniel's prophecies. The enemy declares that Daniel never wrote the book that bears his name and insists that it was written several centuries later than the traditional date of about 600 B. C. This is a mere claim for which there is no proof to satisfy any unbiased mind. But it is not necessary at present

to interest ourselves in that controversy, because no one questions that some time, long before the birth of Christ, and by some one living in Babylon and familiar with the life of that court, this book was written. That admission is sufficient for our present purpose.

The Forgotten Dream of Nebuchadnezzar

Even could the claim of infidelity be proved true, which it has not been and cannot be, still that would not get rid of the forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar. According to the Bible this dream was recalled to the king's remembrance by Daniel the prophet who then gave the interpretation of the dream, and predicted the course of the Gentile world empire from its beginning in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, down to the very close of this age, when on the ruins of these world empires Daniel declared, "The God of heaven would set up His Kingdom which should never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:31-45).

The Unreasonable Demand of the Babylonian Monarch

Remember how the proud Babylonian monarch called together the wise men of his kingdom, and in the spirit of a despot required of them on the penalty of death if they failed, that they should tell him the dream that he had forgotten, and the interpretation thereof. Also that the wise men protested against the unreasonableness of any such demand and declared, "There is none other that can show it before the king, except the god whose dwelling is not with flesh." Their reply greatly angered the King who commanded, forthwith, to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

God Revealed the Dream to Daniel

Then, the record states, that God revealed the dream and its interpretation unto Daniel who at once stayed the execution of the wise men and appeased the wrath of the king by telling him his dream and the interpretation thereof. And this was the dream:

> "The king had seen and behold a great image appeared. This image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before him; and the form thereof was terrible. The head of

> the image was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Then the king saw a stone cut out without hands which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:31-35).

That was the dream which Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten. And who other than the God to Whom the thought of all hearts is known could have revealed that secret unto Daniel?

The Prophet Interprets the Dream

Granted that some one might make up such a dream, and that the account of the dream having been recalled to the king after he had forgotten it, and other little details, might all be pure fiction. But our interest is wholly in the interpretation, the fulfilment of which precludes all possibility of mere human invention.

It should not be forgotten that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon more than 600 years before Christ was born, or over 2500 years ago; and here is the interpretation of the dream as it was given to that monarch by the prophet. Daniel declared to the king,

> "The God of heaven had made him, Nebuchadnezzar, a king of kings, and had given him a kingdom, power, strength and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven had God given into his hand, and had made him ruler over them all."

Then began the "times of the Gentiles"; for Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar in telling him the meaning of the great image, "Thou art the head of gold" (Dan. 2:36-38).

The prophet further predicted and described three other great world empires that would in turn succeed the empire of Babylon. And the fourth empire was to be as strong as iron;

it was also to become a divided empire as represented by the two legs of the image. Further, as the feet and toes were part of potter's clay and part of iron, Daniel predicted, "They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

The prophet next called attention to the ten toes of the image. These represented ten kingdoms which were to be partly strong and partly broken, and he declared,

> "In the days of those ten kings, the God of heaven shall set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever (Olam, *The Age*)."

In conclusion Daniel said to the king,

> "For as much as thou sawest that the Stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:39-45).

Is it possible for any student of history to read that interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar without a feeling of wonder and amazement? Who can tell what shall be even on tomorrow, and much less can any man accurately outline the course of world history down through the centuries for more than 2500 years. Yet Daniel has done that very thing, but he was able so to do only because, as he declares, "The secret was revealed unto him in a night vision by the God of heaven."

The Predictions Have Been Fulfilled Literally Down to the Feet of the Great Image

Of this and other prophecies of Scripture let the destructive critics and their imitators amuse themselves by inventing so-called "spiritual interpretation" that seek to make the Holy Spirit responsible for the fertile imaginations of men. But let those who believe what the prophets have spoken be content to open their histories, and try to discover any mistakes made

by Daniel in his forecast of twenty-five centuries of secular history and world empire. Begin with the empire of Babylon. Read of its might and power and glory, but how nevertheless it was finally overthrown and supplanted by the Medo-Persian empire which represented the breast and arms of the great image even as the head of gold, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, represented the Babylonian empire. Then comes the Grecian empire to flourish for awhile; and we have Alexander the Great weeping because there were no more worlds for him to conquer. Finally, the empire of Rome appears, the great "iron empire," as it is known in history, and under the Caesars it also brought the world under subjection to its scepter. Here therefore are the four great empires that beginning in the days of Nebuchadnezzar have spread themselves over the earth and conquered it.

Secular Historians Confirm the Fulfilment of This Prophecy

Does the secular historian tell of any other world empires that arose besides these four? No, not a single one; and according to the symbolism of numbers used in the Bible the figure four stands for the number of the earth which is pictured as having four corners, north, south, east and west. Further, just as there is a deterioration in the fineness of the metals gold, silver, brass and iron, and a corresponding increase in strength, so the glory and magnificence of these four great empires gradually diminished while, on the other hand, their mighty power to break in pieces and to subdue all things became greater until, in the Roman empire, we behold the mightiest of the four, just as Daniel predicted it would be.

But we have not as yet come to the end of this marvelous prophecy as already it has been fulfilled. We are interested, therefore, to learn what more the secular historian has to tell us. So we read on and note that the fourth empire was divided, and became the Eastern and Western Roman empires corresponding to the two legs of the image; the former having its capital at Constantinople, and the latter having its capital at Rome. That also agrees perfectly with the predictions of Daniel, who further describes the feet of the image as being part of iron and part of clay; and as iron and clay will not hold

together, so he predicted, a breaking up of this fourth empire into smaller kingdoms that would not cleave one to another.

The Roman Empire Broken Up Into Small Nations Today

And what is the present condition of the peoples who, in past centuries, constituted the one great Roman empire? The historian does not need to tell us the answer to that question for we know that now the empire is all divided into smaller kingdoms and states, each jealous of the other, and they are ready to war with each other on the slightest provocation. Italy, France, England, the Balkan states and Germany, were all parts of the Roman empire, and each of those states is seeking for self today all it can get without the least regard to the rights and interests of each other. For that reason it is impossible for them to agree on any policy, or even to form alliances that will hold for any length of time. England would like to crush the unspeakable Turk, but she fears France who finds it to her interests to stand in with that nation of cut-throats and murderers. France would like to break up Germany into small independent states, and thus get rid of the menace to her national existence, but she fears England who is more greedy for the market that a great Germany can provide for English exports than she is for the peace of Europe.

Each Would Welcome the United States as Its Ally

And all of these nations would gladly welcome the United States as an ally in the hope that they might be able to use our Government to pull their chestnuts out of the fires of international politics and strife. But the United States does not propose to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. It is wise for this Government to keep out of such an unhappy, selfish and quarrelsome family of nations. Let these nations settle their own quarrels so that they can begin to help themselves by lawful and peaceful methods rather than by the power of their great war machines; then the United States can help them and will be glad to do so, but not let us hope until they are at peace among themselves.

Such then is the condition of the feet of that image in which appears the iron of imperial rule and the clay of selfish policy

inspired by a fickle populace that is concerned with the welfare of none but its own. Is it not marvelous that Daniel, living away back yonder and standing in the court of Babylon 600 years before the birth of our Lord, could so accurately describe the course of world empire, and the history of Gentile nations from his day right down to the present time?

The Ten Toes, the Smiting, and the Kingdom, only Await Fulfilment

Shall we deny, along with the wise men of the world today, that Daniel had the truth revealed to him by the One, Only living and true God Who alone knoweth the future, and Who only is able to declare and to make known what shall come to pass hereafter? God pity all who are so ignorant and blind and foolish as to call in question Daniel's inspired predictions! Time has now carried us from the crown of that head of gold to the very feet of that great image which are part of iron and part of clay, and thus far the predictions have been fulfilled most accurately and literally.

Part of the Prophecy as Yet Unfulfilled

But Daniel's prophecy still reaches into the future. He declares (1) that the many small kingdoms and states that today represent the feet of that image are finally to became just ten kingdoms so as to form the ten toes of the image. Then (2) that in the days of those ten kings the God of heaven will smite that image and He will break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold which shall become like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind (divine judgments) shall carry them away. And finally (3) that on the ruins of these world empires God will set up and establish His Kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

Shall we doubt the accuracy and the truth of these remaining predictions that have yet to be fulfilled to complete the prophecy? Not unless we are like the Jews of Christ's day on earth whose hearts had waxed gross and who had wilfully closed their eyes that they might not see and understand the truth. We must then believe these remaining predictions of

the inspired prophet, and since amidst the confusion and struggle taking place today among the nations of Europe, and especially the Balkan states, it is possible at almost any time now for these peoples, by alliances or by conquest, to become just ten kingdoms, and so form the ten toes of the great image, we conclude of necessity that the time for the smiting of that image by the God of heaven is not very far distant. Then the Kingdom age will follow immediately and complete the prophecy. The smiting will be accomplished by the outpouring of divine and supernatural judgments which will be followed by Christ's appearing and Kingdom.

Here then is the one prophecy on which to rest the assurance that the dawn of a new age is fast approaching. Gentile world power has about run its full course in this present evil age, and its history, which has been written in the blood of the slain, is very shortly to be completed.

Chapter VIII

INTRODUCTORY TO THE REVELATION

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The second prophecy predicts the history of the Visible Church of Jesus Christ from the beginning to the end of this age. This history is contained in the epistles to the seven churches of Asia which are recorded in chapters 2nd and 3rd of the Book of the Revelation. However before taking up the consideration of these epistles, it will be well to have in mind some facts regarding the book in which they are found. These facts are supplied in the opening chapter of the Revelation. And this book is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Not merely a revelation *from* Him, but rather, and pre-eminently, a revelation *of* Him as He appears today, The glorified Son of Man. It is a revelation of Jesus as He stands related to this earth and all its riches, glory and honor, of which He is the rightful Proprietor; as He stands related also to the True Church of which He is the glorified Head and Husband; His relation is further shown to the nation of Israel of which He is the true Messiah, the Anointed One, to all Gentile nations of which He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and to all persons of every nation, tribe, kindred and tongue, of whom He is the gracious and all-sufficient Saviour if they will accept Him as such, but in any case to whom He stands related as "the Judge of all the earth, Who will do right," and deal truthfully and justly with every one.

The Revelation Is Approved of God

Jesus received from God the Father Himself the Revelation to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass. And Jesus sent His angel, probably a most exalted and distinguished member of the heavenly hosts, who is privileged

to attend upon Christ, to communicate the Revelation unto His servant John. This angel will not permit the servant of Christ to worship him, claiming to be merely a fellow servant and of his brethren the prophets; yet such is his exalted position and authority he does not hesitate to speak at times as though he were himself the Christ who was addressing John. Thus is revealed the close intimacy and complete understanding that exist between our Lord and His angel or ambassador.

The Writer of the Book Is John, the Beloved Disciple

The weight of evidence both traditional and textual strongly points to the beloved disciple and the apostle of Jesus Christ as the John who is mentioned as Christ's servant, and "who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." He further makes the announcement, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (ch. 1:1-3). It will later be shown conclusively that John the beloved disciple, and not John the Presbyter, is the writer of the Book of the Revelation.

In the salutation to the seven churches in Asia to which he was directed to write, John invokes for them, "Grace and peace, from Him (the Father) Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come (revealing the unity existing between the Father and the Son) (John 10:30); and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne (signifying the one Holy Spirit in the plenitude of dispensational power and equipment for the work assigned to Him); and from Jesus Christ; to Whom a sevenfold description is ascribed: (1) The faithful Witness, (2) The First Begotten of the dead, (3) The Prince of the kings of the earth, (4) Him that loved us, (5) Who washed us from our sins in His own blood, (6) Who hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, (7) Him to Whom is the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen, or, "So let it be" (ch. 1:5-8).

Christ Is Extolled

By this sevenfold description Christ is extolled: (1) As a witness He was faithful even though the truth does not please

all, and some would even kill Him for telling them the truth. Still He was faithful, and so continues to be in all that is revealed in this book which calls attention to certain truth that is not pleasing to any one, namely that for the impenitent there is no possible escape from the just wrath of a holy God. (2) As the First Begotten of the dead. This signifies His rank, and probably also points to the rewards obtained as the result of His victory over death. Jesus Himself raised some from the dead before His own resurrection, and others were raised by Old Testament prophets. But such persons were raised to life only to die again, while over Jesus death had no more power. Hence He was the First Fruits of them that sleep. (3) As He Who is even now the Prince of all earthly kings. That He is neither recognized nor honored as such at present does not change the fact. (4) As He Who loved us enough to die for us while we were yet enemies, and Who still regards His own with an everlasting love. The Revised Version reads, "He loveth," rather than merely, "He loved." (5) As the One in Whose blood we are washed, cleansed, freed from all our sins, Jesus is further extolled (6) as He Who hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. Hence as a royal priesthood we can enter into the holy place and offer our prayers of intercession for others. And likewise (7) as He to Whom belongs the glory of the great salvation, and also the dominion over the earth, and over all things on the earth,—a dominion which our race forfeited by sin, and can only regain through the work and blessing of the Redeemer. Thus at the very beginning of this book the glorified Son of Man is thus fittingly extolled by His servant John the beloved disciple.

The Second Advent

And John bears witness also (ch. 1:7) to His Second Advent. "Behold, He cometh with clouds." This accords with the testimony of the angels at the time of His ascension (Acts 1:9-11). Everything in the Revelation directs attention and leads up to this great event, our Lord's return: "He cometh." This is the blessed hope (Titus 2:13) of all true Christians, even though some may fail to understand the full significance and meaning of the truth, "He cometh." "And every eye shall

see Him"; not only such as love His appearing, and who shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, but all others also shall see Him regardless of what may have been their attitude toward Him. The children of Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, are specially mentioned: "They also that pierced Him." Like doubting Thomas, they refuse to believe except they see. And they shall see, and believe, and secure their reward, but it will not equal the blessedness of those who accept the evidence as sufficient, and believe even though they have not as yet seen Him (John 20:27-29). "And all kindred of the earth shall wail because of Him." There are tears of joy as well as of sorrow. And there are tears of sorrow for sins that may cause one to weep bitterly, as did Peter after his denial, yet they may lead to rejoicing; and there also is the wailing of lost souls that is hopeless. On that occasion there probably will be representatives of all classes. "Even so, Amen," writes John in the confidence that the Judge of all the earth will do right; and that the return of Christ will mean the doom only of such as have justly earned the wages of sin.

To this anouncement of His servant, Christ Himself adds the testimony, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty" (v. 8). Thus, on His own behalf, Jesus claims for Himself, as the glorified Son of Man, the recognition and honor that belong only to "the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity."

John's Account of Himself

In writing the Revelation of Jesus Christ to send to the seven churches of Asia, John, the servant of Christ who was chosen for the work, tells who he is, where he was at the time the Revelation was given to him, why he was in that particular place and how the vision was received by him.

> "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (v. 9).

Thus he describes himself as the "brother and companion" of those to whom he was to send the Revelation (1) in tribulation:

The early Christians knew from experience that "If any man would live godly in Christ Jesus, he should suffer persecution." The beloved disciple was no exception. (2) In the Kingdom,—the Kingdom prepared for the true servants of God from the foundation of the world, and which Jesus had promised to His disciples. By faith, which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), John was in the Kingdom. However the hope had not as yet been realized, and for that reason he was likewise (3) in the patience of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:24, 25).

Patmos is a small island of about sixty square miles. It lies to the SW of the coast of Asia minor, and it is not more than fifteen miles from Ephesus which was probably John's home city. Ancient tradition says that offenders of rank were banished to that rocky island and required to work in the mines or marble quarries. John was on that isle "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Whether "for the word of God, etc.," explains the cause or the occasion of his being on Patmos is not clear, but according to tradition he was banished as an exile to that island, and probably for the crime of being a faithful witness for Christ.

The Patmos Vision

> "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches that are in Asia" (vs. 10, 11).

It is usual for expositors to explain that "being in the spirit on the Lord's day," means that John was either in a specially reverent frame of mind on that Sabbath, or that he was more than ordinarily filled with the Holy Spirit on that occasion. Such explanations of these words are mere private interpretations, and one who indulges this unscriptural liberty at the very beginning of this prophecy need not expect to have its meaning made clear to him. The words thus misinterpreted supply the KEY to the understanding of this book; hence it is very important and necessary to learn their meaning from the Scriptures before attempting the study of this great prophecy.

Consider then that the expression, "the Lord's day," is merely a brief form of rendering into English the genitive form of the Greek word signifying, "The day of the Lord," and evidently it means nothing other than that same Day concerning the character of which so much is to be found written in the Bible. Young's, or any other good Concordance, will enable inquirers to find many such expressions as "the Lord's house," "the Lord's law," "the Lord's temple," "the Lord's people," "the Lord's table," "the Lord's children," "the Lord's covenant," "the Lord's word," etc. They will also find, in every case, the other form of expressing the same thought in English as, "the house of the Lord," "the law of the Lord," "the temple of the Lord," "the people of the Lord," "the table of the Lord," "the children of the Lord," "the covenant of the Lord," and "the word of the Lord." Now will any one of intelligence seriously claim that the difference in the English form of translating the genitive of one and the same word causes a change in the meaning? Certainly they will not. Then why contrary to all precedent and without the least authority from the Scriptures should the Greek genitive in this particular verse be rendered "the Lord's day" instead of "the day of the Lord"? And why attach to the word the meaning of "the first day of the week," or the Christian Sabbath, a meaning that the expression never has anywhere in the Bible?

The Parousia Is Not the Day of the Lord

Dr. R. F. Weymouth in "The New Testament in Modern Speech," translates "kuriokos." "The day of the Lord," and, in a footnote, he claims that it refers

> "either to the time of the Redeemer's Parousia, or return to this earth, or else to the interval that was to elapse before the coming of that time." He says, "that was the Seer's standpoint," and he adds, "IN THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES XIV, we read, 'Every Lord's (day) of the Lord come together and break bread.' Otherwise we have no reason to suppose that Sunday had yet received its present name of the Lord's day."

As a matter of fact there is no reason whatever to suppose that the Lord's day and Sunday were by any of the inspired

writers regarded as synonymous. There is evidence that some of the early Christians called the first day of the week the Lord's day, to distinguish it from the Jewish Sabbath. There is no evidence that the practice ever became general until more recent times. However that is aside from the point. The Book of the Revelation is the work of an inspired writer who certainly would not attach an entirely new meaning to a familiar expression without so much as a word or a hint to indicate that he had used the expression to convey a thought entirely different from what ordinarily would be understood by it.

Further it appears as though Dr. Weymouth had confused. "The day of the Lord," with the Parousia or the Lord's return to this earth. That was the mistake of the Thessalonians who as taught by the apostle were waiting for the return of Christ (1 Thes. 1:10), but they appear to have thought that "the return of Christ," and "the day of Christ," or "the day of the Lord," referred to the same time and event. Hence they were greatly troubled and the fear that "the day of Christ" was at hand caused them to become alarmed. But while Paul encouraged them to continue in the hope of the speedy coming of the Lord, and of the gathering of the saints together unto Him, yet he plainly teaches that "the day of Christ," or "of the Lord," was a very different thing. He reminds them that THAT DAY would not come until after the Spirit had been withdrawn, and after the apostacy of the Church, and after the man of sin, the son of perdition, or the lawless one, or the Antichrist, had been revealed (2 Thes. 2:1-12).

"The day of the Lord" includes the whole period of the great tribulation (Lk. 17:26-32), but especially the closing day of that event which is to end with that one "Great day of the wrath of God and of the Lamb." This event will come only after "The Rapture," or "The appearing of Christ *for* His saints," and it will precede the return of Christ *with* His saints to reign on the earth (John 14:2, 3; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Jude 14; Rev. 1:7; 5:10). We understand them, "the day of the Lord," or "the Lord's day," to have the same meaning and to refer to the same period of time as do like expressions when used in other portions of the Scriptures (Zech. 14:1-7; Mal. 4:1; Lk. 21:22, etc.).

The Seer in the Spirit Saw the Events of the Lord's Day

The Seer explains therefore that "in the spirit," rather than in the body, he was set down in the midst of the day of the Lord. Thus he became a witness to the terrible events that at that time will occur on the earth. Paul declared that he was caught up into Paradise, but "whether in the body, or out of the body," he did not know. John however knew that it was impossible for him to be present in the body, to behold scenes that would not occur until a time in the distant future. But in the spirit, "he was transported to that future day and permitted to witness some times in the heavenlies, and at other times while standing on the earth, the scenes that would only actually materialize "in the days of the vengeance of our God." Thus he saw and was qualified to testify concerning the things which shall be hereafter. And since the voice was speaking in the present time while "in the spirit," John was in the future he heard the "voice behind him, a great voice as a trumpet."

The Seven Churches of Asia

The Speaker was the glorified Son of Man who commissioned John to write what he saw in a book or scroll, and to send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia. These churches were as follows: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Going north from Ephesus to Pergamos, thence east to Thyatira, and south to Laodicea, a traveler might visit each of these towns in which had been planted Christian Churches. There were other such churches in Asia; some even larger and more influential, but for some reason Jesus chose to send the message only to these seven which He specially designated. And that reason, as will be shown, was because the number seven stands for dispensational fulness or completion, and because in those particular local churches at that very time there were present certain moral and spiritual conditions to which attention is called in the epistles sent to each; and Jesus to Whom all things are known knew that these various conditions, in each of these seven churches, would characterize the One Visible Church in her development, during the seven periods of her history which began and will end with "the dispensation of the grace of God." For that

reason He chose only seven churches, and He selected these particular churches to provide in part the prophecy of this book, —a prophecy which from first to last is a forecast of the history of the Christian Church, of the nation of Israel, and of the Gentile world power from the beginning to the end of this present evil age,—an age which will witness the end also of "the times of the Gentiles."

The Vision of the Judge of All the Earth

From the position which "in the spirit" he occupied in time future, the Seer turned to look back to his own day and time

> "To see the voice that spake with me. And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle" (vs. 12, 13).

The One like the Son of Man is generally recognized as our Lord Jesus Christ. However Jesus here appears to John not as the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, from Whom, in the days of His earthly ministry, men turned away the face as from one possessed of no attraction for them. Rather as John then beheld Him Jesus appeared marvelously transformed. He is the glorified Son of Man possessed of a comeliness, beauty and majesty, surpassing the power of words fittingly to describe. The garment He wears and the position also of the golden girdle suggest at once a person of high rank, possessed of both royal and priestly dignity. To describe His appearance the Seer must employ similes and he writes:

> "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters" (vs. 14, 15).

This at once suggests that "the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." But the description has a far deeper significance. In Daniel's vision there is seen "one like the Son of Man Who came to the Ancient of days to receive dominion, glory and a Kingdom." And of

the Ancient of days, Who is God the Father, it is declared, "His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool" (Dan. 7:9, 13, 14). This pen picture of Jesus therefore identifies Him with deity. He was in the beginning with God, and was God; and He, Whom John beholds, is none other than very God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the God-Man glorified. Paul, the chiefest of the apostles, was no doubt granted the privilege of seeing Him Whom he was persecuting as "the One altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand." But it is permitted to no other prophet or apostle than John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, to furnish for the reverent contemplation of all who love the Lord an inspired picture of Him Who is the Judge of all the earth. Happy indeed are all they who can truly say: "This is my Friend."

Jesus Is Qualified for His Great Work

Even as fire burns away and consumes all dross so that only the pure metal remains, so those eyes will pierce through and penetrate every subterfuge ever used by any one to deceive. They also will burn their way down to the deepest recesses of man's being to discover the motive and the very thought behind every word and every act. Thus there is nothing done in secret that can be kept from those eyes; for by them every hidden thing shall be discovered and revealed.

And those feet of burnished brass reveal how utterly powerless, puny and insignificant even the mightiest of His opponents will be in that day of the Lord which the Seer describes (Rev. 19:22), and concerning which Jehovah-Jesus declared:

> "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury: and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment; for the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore Mine own arm brought deliverance; and My fury, it upheld Me. And I will tread down the people in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth" (Isa. 63:3-6).

But while the invincible power, suggested by those feet of burnished brass, may well cause the enemies of Jesus Christ to fear and tremble, on the other hand they inspire with confidence all who trust in Him and who wait for Him to deliver them from all their enemies.

> "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:28-31).

Further, John likens His voice to the sound of many waters. It is therefore a voice that will be heard, and it is a voice of power and authority that can compel obedience and submission. At the command of that voice even the wind and sea obey; and the day is coming when "all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth" at His command.

> "And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (v. 16).

Everything about this description of the glorified Son of Man bespeaks power, might and divine majesty that qualify Him for His work both of Judge and of Ruler. The stars in His right hand, the sharp sword that went out of His mouth and the countenance shining like the sun in mid-day splendor and strength recall the words of the psalmist:

> "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How Thou didst drive out the nations with Thy hand, and plantest them; how Thou didst afflict the people and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their arm save them: but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hast a favor unto them" (Ps. 44:1-3).

Before the light of that countenance the unconverted, persecuting Saul, who afterward became Paul the great apostle to the Gentiles, was smitten to the earth. And Paul declares that the brightness of His appearing will destroy the lawless one, the man of sin, the son of perdition. And when the saintly John beheld Him in His matchless glory, even that beloved disciple writes:

> "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." (v. 17).

What confident assurance the true believer therefore is justified in possessing and proclaiming, not only as regards his present safety and salvation, nor yet merely in respect to his certain victory over death and the sting of death; but not less as regards his future entrance into the joys of his Lord? This confidence will be further strengthened if he recalls the words of the Lord Jesus concerning those whom He claims as His own, "No man is able to pluck them out of My hand. My Father Who gave them unto Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one" (John 10:29).

John Is Comforted and Commissioned to Write

Upon His beloved friend and disciple the glorified Christ gently laid His hand to bestow comfort. The Seer writes:

> "And He laid His hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen: and have the keys of hades and of death" (vs. 17, 18).

Blessed assurance! The power and authority over hades and death which Jesus manifested when He arose triumphant from the tomb, and when He made the cloud His chariot and ascended, in glorious majesty, to His place at the right hand of the Father, He has never laid aside, but as he declared to His beloved disciple, He still retains the keys. And since today Jesus is on the throne of His Father Who ruleth, not merely over the earth, but also over the entire universe, the true be-

liever can sing with the spirit and with the understanding, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," or in other words, Although with the dark and dread shadow of death, the king of terrors, hovering over and around me, I walk through this earth, knowing that it is appointed unto men once to die, still I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; and Thou hast the keys of hades and of death.

After comforting His friend, the glorified Son of Man gave the Seer his commission:

> "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." (v. 19).

Here, then, was John's commission. He was to write the things which he had seen, manifestly the vision of Christ glorified and fully equipped for His work as the Judge of all the earth; also the things that are which not less evidently referred to the conditions both moral and spiritual as they then prevailed in the seven churches to which he was to write, and to the conditions that prevailed at that time and have prevailed ever since on the earth under the reign of Satan; and then finally, he was to write the things which shall be hereafter, or during the great tribulation on the heels of which will follow the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

The Revelation Meant to be Understood, and Not to Mystify

> "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (v. 20).

But before John was permitted to write anything, the mystery of the seven stars in the right hand of the glorified One, and the mystery of the golden candlesticks in the midst of which He appeared, must needs be carefully explained. God gave this revelation of His Son Jesus Christ, not for the purpose of mystifying His servants who believed on Him, but rather *"to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass"* (v. 1).

In the several visions which John records there are mysteries; symbols also are employed, and there are "dark sayings of old" not a few. But for the understanding of these things the servants of Christ are not left to guesswork. Rather it is required that, like the Bereans, they shall search the Scriptures, because somewhere in God's precious Word all the mysteries are cleared up, and all the symbols, and not less the dark sayings are explained, even as are the mysteries of the seven stars and of the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.

A Prayer for the Guidance of the Holy Spirit as We Study This Prophecy

Blessed and adorable Holy Spirit, as the Third Person of the Trinity we believe in Thee and desire wholeheartedly to trust in Thee as our divine Teacher and Guide.

We know Thee only as we know the Father through the revelation of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

In the Word of God Thy work is declared. We are acquainted therefore with what Thou hast performed in connection with the restoration of a ruined earth to make it a habitable abode for man. We know in part at least what work Thou hast done in securing the conviction and conversion of sinners, in creating them anew through the washing of regeneration, in building them up, according to their use of divinely appointed means, in faith and in holiness, and in sealing such unto the day of redemption.

We know Thee as the One Who bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and Who also maketh intercession for us.

But we know little of Thy Person and glorious perfections; for Thou hast not come into the world to speak of Thyself. Rather Thou art come to take of the things of Christ, and to reveal them unto us. This is Thy great mission in the present dispensation of the grace of God, and Thou, and Thou alone art able to lead into all truth those who will obey Thee and follow Thy leading.

We look to Thee then and depend on Thee to work in us

both to will and to do of God's good pleasure. Come Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and to abide with us. Be Thou our Guide and Teacher in all our reading of God's Word, and especially as we study the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass.

This favor and blessing we invoke in the name of Jesus our Lord Whose appearing is our hope. Amen.

Chapter IX

THE PROPHECY CONCERNING THE VISIBLE CHURCH

THE FIRST THREE EPISTLES

The Witness of History to the Prophetic Character of the Seven Epistles to the Churches

There are many who do not consider the epistles to the seven churches as being a prophetic forecast of the character, course and condition of the One Visible Church in each of the several periods or epochs of her history during this entire evil age. And among those who reject this understanding and interpretation of these epistles are some of the most eminent, scholarly, trusted and beloved leaders of the Church and exponents of the Word of God. But while these Bible students agree to reject this method of interpreting these epistles they are at disagreement among themselves as to just what we are to learn today for our profit from these letters, and also as regards the special purpose they serve in connection with the other teachings of the Book of the Revelation which all expositors accept as being prophetic in character.

Further, there is not one of these expositors who has any explanation to offer as to why there are just seven epistles, or as to why these particular and for the most part obscure churches were addressed, rather than some of the larger and better known churches which also existed at that time in Asia Minor. Beside, although some few of these scholars notice the fact, still they have no reason to suggest as to why, in the first three epistles, the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," come *before* the promise given to him that overcometh, while in the last four epistles they come *after* that promise, and at the very close of the epistle.

This fact suggests that the Holy Spirit, having been resisted and grieved, is about to withdraw from the fellowship of a Church in which He is being dishonored.

But the Bible requires that we prove all things, and fortunately it will not be very difficult today to demonstrate from the history of the Church herself, as it has now been written for a period covering more than nineteen centuries, that these epistles addressed to the seven churches are nothing less or other than a prophetic forecast of the character and conduct of the One Visible Church from the beginning down to the very end of the dispensation of the grace of God.

Read Any Church History; Preferably Dr. Schaff's

Almost any Church historian will serve the purpose. But there are reasons why "The History of the Christian Church," by Dr. Philip Schaff, is specially recommended to all who desire to put to the test the claim that these seven epistles are a prophetic forecast of the condition and course of the Visible Church of Jesus Christ during the several periods of her history as it has now been written.

The reasons briefly stated are: (1) Among the many Church historians Dr. Schaff is generally recognized as one of the best and most scholarly; (2) He cannot be accused of bias in favor of the above claim, since he rejects it; (3) Failing to make any distinction between the Church and the Kingdom of heaven, he declares that "Church history is a continuous commentary on the Lord's twin parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven." Both of these parables were spoken of the Kingdom and not at all of the Church, but the Doctor considers the Church and the Kingdom identical.

Further, Dr. Schaff divides his history of the Church into nine epochs, or periods, but of these epochs he says, the fourth, fifth and sixth, which cover the Middle or Dark Ages, "are related to each other as the wild youth, the ripe manhood and the declining old age of one person. The three periods may be treated separately or as a continuous whole. Both methods have their advantages." He chose to treat them separately; had he treated them as one, instead of three, he would have had seven instead of nine epochs. And seven is the number of

dispensational fulness or completion,—a fact that at least suggests that the epistles to the seven churches include what it has pleased God, through His servant John, to reveal concerning the One Visible Church throughout the whole course of her history, during the entire church age, or dispensation, the same as do the seven spirits before the throne reveal the plenitude of the One Holy Spirit in His dispensational fulness and power.

A Fair Method of Comparison Only Is Necessary

It is proposed then to learn from the Scriptures what they have to teach in regard to the character and conduct of each of these particular churches to which the epistles are addressed. And what the Bible reveals on the subject can be compared with what has been written by Dr. Schaff, or some other Church historian, concerning the Church in each of the several periods of her history. There is certainly no fairer or more satisfactory way in which to test the claim that the seven epistles are a prophetic forecast of the history of the One Visible Church during this age than by this proposed method. And in our judgment such a test will prove Dr. Schaff's theory false, and on the other hand supply the very best possible evidence in support of the claim which he rejects, at least by implication.

The Church of Ephesus

> "Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (ch. 2:1).

Angels are ministering spirits; and God's angels are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). Every person and each organization of people possess and cultivate a spirit of ministry, if not for others, then for self. Churches, being professedly the organized followers of Christ Whose whole life was a ministry of loving service rendered to others, will likewise possess a spirit of ministry, and if the Church be composed of a majority who are true followers of Christ that Church will manifest a spirit for ministering to others, while if the majority are mere professors

or false professors, theirs will be a spirit of self ministry. In either case the spirit represents the organization or Church and justly shares with the members either the deserved commendation or condemnation. That ministering spirit is personified, and in the several epistles addressed as "the angel of the Church," because it truly represents the spirit that prevails and controls among the members of the organization.

Further, in each of the first five epistles, the One sending the message identifies Himself by one or another of the characteristics found in the inspired pen picture of the Son of Man (ch. 1:12-17), thus making it manifest that Christ, the Judge of all the earth, is He who speaks to these churches; Hence all do well to take heed how they hear. And to the angel of the Church of Ephesus the Glorified Christ describes Himself as the One Who holds in His hand the spirits of these churches, and Who also is in their very midst, and so He knows what they are and what they are doing; hence in each case after announcing Himself, His message begins with the words, "I know thy works."

The message to the Ephesian Church begins with commendation:

> "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted" (ch. 2:2, 3).

But the spirit of that Church was not perfect; hence the message continues:

> "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate" (ch. 2:4-6).

This Church had left its first love. In other words it was no longer possessed of the spirit of those ready to forsake houses

and lands, parents and children, and even to count not life dear to self in serving the Lord as had been the spirit of the apostles and of the first disciples because of their love for Christ (Matt. 19:27; Lk. 5:11). No, such supreme love had been left behind; it was no longer in evidence in the Church as a whole. There was still great love for Christ shown in the willingness to obey Him, and many of the members were willing even to lay down their lives for His name's sake. But that was not the spirit of the Church at that time as it had been at the first. Rather, their love had become mixed with the alloy of selfishness. For this reason there was reproof, also a call to repentance, and a threat to remove her candlestick out of his place in the midst of the Church. But this Church was specially commended for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes (Greek, nikao, "to conquer," and laos, "the people" or "laity") which were also hateful to Christ.

> "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (ch. 2:7).

Spiritual sight and hearing depend on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; hence these faculties are not possessed by all Church members; but those having the ear are directed to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches in these epistles. And the overcomer was promised the privilege to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. That tree was removed from the Garden of Eden after the fall of man, but under the new heaven and on the new earth when Paradise will be restored for earth dwellers, there will again be found the tree of life and its meaning will be considered in that connection. Such then were the conditions in the Church of Ephesus as recorded in the Scriptures (Rev. 2:1-7).

First Period of Church History, A.D. 1-100

Turn now to the historian to learn what he has to say concerning the Church in the first period of her history. This epoch Dr. Schaff designates as "Christianity in the Apostolic

Church, from the incarnation to the death of St. John, A.D. 1-100."

It is impossible to quote from this historian verbatim, but all are recommended to read the history for themselves and to verify the statements here made which are only a very brief summary of the facts recorded by the historian.

And it is admitted that during this first period the Church is at her best. She adheres to the teachings of Christ and His apostles, and holds loyally to the faith delivered once for all unto the saints by these inspired teachers. She reveals the spirit of the Master in her ministry, testifying to the grace of God which bringeth salvation, keeping herself apart from the evils which are in the world, and faithfully adhering to the rule that "One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren."

In this period the Church is greatly troubled with false teachers some of whom claim to be apostles; but she turns a deaf ear to all such teachers and holds fast to the teachings of Scripture. In brief, the historian finds that conditions in the Church during this period are very similar to those described in the epistle to the Church of Ephesus. Love for Christ still continued to burn brightly although not quite so ardently as at the first.

Such a sect as the Nicolaitanes is unknown, but the spirit, of which the etymology of the word is suggestive, which also later developed and divided an equal Church brotherhood (Matt. 23:8) into "priests" or "clergy" who were to be distinguished from and regarded as in all respect superior to the "laity," was not even tolerated among the Christians of that period. Rather, they held to the teachings of the Master when he declared, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But so it shall not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be chiefest shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:42-45).

This is a brief and very incomplete summary of what Dr. Schaff has recorded in his history. And all are earnestly

recommended to read it for there is none better to be found. But sufficient has been gleaned to show that the historian was correct in closing the history of this period with the statement, "The conditions found in the Church, during this period of her history, are very similar to those mentioned in the epistle to the Church of Ephesus."

The Church in Smyrna

Consider then the epistle to the Church in Smyrna.

> "And unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (ch. 2:8-11).

As though anticipating the experience to be suffered by this Church, its members are reminded that He Who sent them the message is the first and the last, Who was dead, and is alive. He knows and sympathizes with the spirit of this Church which endures tribulation and poverty. However, He declares they are rich; for they have the true riches which the world can neither give nor take away. And He knows the blasphemy of those who profess the true faith in hypocrisy, and brands such as the emissaries of Satan. The faithful He exhorts, Not to fear the things they should suffer; and they are specially warned that the devil would cast some of them into prison, and they were to have tribulation for ten days.

This certainly is a pen picture of a Church under persecution, (1) from false brethren, and (2) from the unconverted, godless world. The so-called Jews were either those in the fellowship of the Church, or those among the Jews who professed to be God's people, but who were unrelenting persecutors of Christians. Among the Christians of that period many were converts

from Judaism, and some such chose to retain their identity as Jews although they professed to be followers of Christ. Such were not true converts, and possible they were the leaders in the movement that led the Church away from her first love. Evidently they had very little sympathy with the beliefs and practices of Christians who would not observe the laws of Moses. Hence they opposed and criticized such, and spake all manner of evil against them falsely. They would also choose for their associates and companions unbelievers of whom many were considered very nice respectable people although they were worldlings who would not profess Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

And it is not difficult to understand how this dislike for true Christians, which was cherished by mere Jewish professors, might easily be communicated to their friends who would further spread exaggerated reports and rumors to other representatives of the world until at last the suspicion of the entire community might be awakened against the true followers of Jesus Christ. As a result, without just cause or fair trial, they would be judged, condemned and persecuted by a godless world as supposed enemies charged with secretly plotting against the welfare of society. This is ever a favorite method of the devil who thus engenders evil passions in his children, and so arouses them to acts of hostility against the righteous.

The tribulation is said to be for ten days. But the number ten stands for the completion of man's imperfect work; hence the ten days cover all the persecutions to which the Christians of that period were subjected. Of course the purpose of these persecutions was to exterminate the followers of Christ, but while the Christians suffered terribly, the purpose of their persecutors was not realized. Then as always the blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the Church, and the ten days represented the entire period of the world's open and active antagonism to the Church. All who were faithful unto death were promised the crown of life. This is not the diadem, or royal crown, but the victor's wreath of victory and rejoicing. And the overcomer was not to be hurt of the second death which means the final banishment of the soul from God to abide under His wrath.

Second Period of Church History, A.D. 100-311

The historian Schaff defines this second period as "Christianity under persecution in the Roman empire. From the death of St. John to Constantine, the first Christian emperor, A.D. 100-311."

And history records that during this period from one cause and another many professed Christians began to manifest a spirit of impatience with the strict rules and practices of the Apostolic Church; much also of the former zeal for true and undefiled religion was abandoned, and in its place there appeared the willingness, and even the desire, to conform more and more to the customs of the world of unregenerate humanity in order to escape the reproach and ill-will that were stirred up by a consistent adherence to Church requirements and vows.

The historian further describes the terrible persecutions that raged during this period under the direction of several of the Roman emperors. Thus multitudes of Christians were compelled to endure all manner of reproaches and indignities for Christ's sake together with imprisonment, torture, and the most shameful and cruel deaths that devilish ingenuity and malice could devise. Schaff specifically refers to this period as "the age of the martyrs of Jesus Christ." He mentions these persecutions as continuing, with greater or less fury, throughout practically the entire epoch, or down to the conversion of Constantine, the first Christian emperor.

Those who have eyes to see can easily recognize the remarkable resemblance between conditions as they are described in the epistle to the Church in Smyrna, and the facts of history as these have been recorded by many able and faithful historians of the Christian Church.

The Church in Pergamos

Pass on therefore to the consideration of what has been written for our learning concerning the Church in Pergamos:

> "And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write; These things saith He Who hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days

wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (ch. 2:12, 13).

In the first epistle, Christ describes Himself as "He Who walketh in the midst of the seven candlesticks,"—a picture of close and loving fellowship with His people. In the second epistle, He identifies Himself as "the first and the last, Who was dead, and is alive," as though to comfort and to give needed encouragement to those whom He exhorts "to be faithful unto death," and to whom He gives the promise "I will give thee the crown of life." But in this third epistle, He reminds those to whom the message is sent that "He hath the sharp sword with two edges," as though to warn those addressed that their conduct, if persisted in, would bring punishment upon them.

This Church still professed to be Christian and it clung to the faith even in the days of the martyr Antipas. No such person as Antipas is known to the historian as having been martyred at that time. But the word means, "against all," and it may be employed to signify and to include all Christians who had been put to death, because they would not consent in any manner to conform to the world. In loyalty to Christ they had held out against all persons and refused every inducement that might have been offered to them to make friends with the world of unregenerate humanity.

Those Who Imperiled Their Souls to Save Their Lives

Others, however, while known as Christians and while the did not repudiate the faith, evidently considered it wiser and better in every way to live at peace with the world rather than to suffer martyrdom. Thus, during the reign of persecution they had escaped with their lives, but it proved to be at the peril of their souls, because they are now found dwelling where Satan's seat is. Satan of course dwells in the world of ungodly men and women,—the world that lieth in the evil one. And his seat of power and authority is that of civil rulers who occupy the places of power and influence in the nation, and whom Satan can control through their covetousness and selfish ambition.

It is through such rulers that Satan is able to make laws that are opposed to God's law, and to require submission to his will

in disregard of the will of God. As taught by Jesus and His inspired apostles, the thought of the first Christians was that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, but here in Pergamos the Christians had settled themselves down in the world where Satan dwelleth, and were depending for their protection and safety on an arm of flesh, rather than on the mighty God of Jacob.

The Doctrine of Balaam

> "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (ch. 2:14).

Among these Christians were those who held the doctrine of Balaam because of which Israel had become idolaters and fornicators in God's sight. (Everywhere in Scripture the worship of idols is viewed as spiritual unchastity.)

Balak, king of Moab, had offered Balaam great reward if he would curse Israel, and the prophet was very anxious to get that reward, but he could not curse those whom God had blessed (Num. 31:15, 16; 22:5; 23:8). However, he thought out another way by which he hoped to gain the coveted reward. And this was the way of Balaam (2 Pet. 2:15): He reasoned that if he could corrupt Israel and induce them to do evil in the sight of the Lord, that then God would no longer bless them; hence he would be able to curse them and so obtain for himself the offered reward which might have been money, or position and popularity.

It never seems to have occurred to this false prophet that while God would certainly chasten His people for their sin, they might be brought thus to repentance, and so continue to enjoy the blessing of God. This was the error of Balaam, or the mistake in his reasoning (Jude 11). He therefore suggested to Balak to make peace with Israel; to treat them kindly, and so induce them to allow their sons to marry godless wives, and to give their daughters to unite in marriage with heathen husbands. This was what Balak did, and to their sorrow Israel accepted these terms, settled in Shittim, lived at

peace with Balak, began to intermarry with these idolaters, and to offer sacrifices to their gods.

Thus Israel was guilty of spiritual unchastity, and having defiled themselves with the heathen, God sent a plague upon His people that destroyed twenty-four thousand of them. As a mere hireling prophet, loving the wages of unrighteousness and anxious only to make a market for his gift (2 Pet. 2:15), Balaam succeeded to that extent, but contrary to his expectation God accepted an atonement for the sins of Israel and continued to bless them, while later He visited upon their tempters the punishment that their sins deserved.

Among the members of the Church in Pergamos were those who held this doctrine of Balaam, and by their teaching and example they no doubt tempted their brethren to abandon their pilgrim character, to make peace with the world, and to defile their separation unto God by intermarriage with the heathen, and so they incurred the guilt of spiritual unchastity.

The Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes

> "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (ch. 2:15).

When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (Jas. 1:15). So declared the apostle. In the very first period of the church, the sin of Nicolaitanism was conceived in the hearts of some professed Christians although at that time its deeds were hated by the Church. Now it brings forth fruit, for here in Pergamos it has become a doctrine,—something believed in and advocated by certain of the Church members at this later period. And apparently they are permitted to hold that doctrine, and even to advocate and propagate the sin without rebuke. Still later, in the history of the Church, this same sin having been finished brought forth death that was experienced in the Church in Sardis which had a name to live, but was dead.

When Jesus Christ solemnly declares that He hates even the spirit of a certain thing, it follows that the putting of that thing into practice would be nothing short of an abomination in His sight. In the epistle to the Church in Ephesus, Christ

referred to the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, and again in His epistle to this Church in Pergamos He calls attention to the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and in each case He declares: "which thing I HATE."

Lords Over God's Heritage

Christ not only disapproves of the spirit that desires to lord it over the brethren, and as has been noted, such is the etymological meaning of Nicolaitanes, but He hates it, because it is the spirit of the world that lieth in the evil one, or in other words, it is the spirit of the Devil whose fall from his exalted rank, as a holy angel, resulted from just such a spirit of pride and self-exaltation and vain glorification (1 Tim. 3:6). Milton rightly interpreted that spirit when he represented Satan as saying:

'Tis better to reign in Hell,
Than to serve in Heaven.

This is the very opposite of the Christ spirit. Jesus came to do the will of Him that sent Him; He pleased not Himself; He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. And it is His will that such shall ever be the spirit of His Church in which the chiefest of all must be the servant of all. This calls for a humble, rather than a proud spirit; it requires a spirit of unselfish ministry rather than one that selfishly expects to be ministered unto; it is a spirit of love that considers others as better than self rather than a spirit that regards self as better, wiser, more honorable and more deserving of attention than others.

The Form of Church Government of Less Importance Than the Spirit That Governs

A particular form of Church government, whether Presbyterian or Congregational or Episcopal, is of relatively trifling importance compared with the spirit that undertakes to govern in a Church. What the Bible reveals regarding the mere form of government is so incomplete and indefinite that sincere Christians, one not less anxious than another to do the will of God, reach different conclusions, and may adopt without becom-

ing blameworthy any form of Church government which, in their judgment, is considered best adapted to promote the work for which the Church of Christ was instituted, and for keeping the spirit of unity in the bonds of peace. But be the form what it may, the all-important thing to observe is the great truth that "One is our Master, even Christ, and all we, officers and laymen alike, are BRETHREN," on the same plane of social equality, and entitled to the same respect and consideration however our gifts may differ.

In the true Church of Jesus Christ, the rich and the poor meet together as brethren, for the Lord is the Maker of them all, unless it be of those among them who claim to be self-made. In that case such are probably the workmanship of Satan. Whether it be pope or bishop or priest or rector or plain pastor and minister or elder or deacon—the man of office in the Church of Jesus Christ who under the pretence of magnifying his office considers himself the superior of his brethren, especially the laity, thereby thinks of himself more highly than he ought to think; and if he puts such thinking into practice, and begins to lord it over God's heritage, he is guilty of the thing that Christ HATES.

The Call to Repentance and the Warning

> "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth" (ch. 2:16).

Mark the difference made between "thee," the Church itself, and "them," or those in that Church who held these false doctrines. The angel or spirit of the Church in Pergamos, representing the majority in control, was still holding to the truth and practicing accordingly. It needed therefore to repent, not for holding the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes, but rather for permitting or tolerating such perversion of the truth by those in the fellowship of that Church, and subject to her discipline which evidently was not being exercised. If necessary, then, Christ would come and fight against them, the holders of false doctrines, with the sword of His mouth, equivalent to the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. But there would be no necessity even for such

a fight or conflict in the Church of Christ if those in control and responsible for conditions would be faithful and require all in the fellowship of the Church either to walk in the truth, or else to exercise the right of every honest man, and to separate himself from a fellowship with which he was no longer in agreement even in respect to the fundamental doctrines held by the Church.

The Promise to the Overcomer

> "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (ch. 2:17).

The Spirit is still dwelling in the midst of that Church. His promise to the overcomer is (1) the hidden manna which is Christ Himself Who only, as the true bread, is able to satisfy the longing soul, and to fill the hungry soul with goodness. That the promise means that the overcomer shall feed upon Christ is evident from Christ's discourse on the true bread. It was delivered in the hearing of those who claimed, "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness: as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat" (John 6:31-36, 48-59). (2) The white stone signifies a place in the true Church, the Church in mystery, or the Bride of Christ. Everywhere in Scripture, the Rock is used symbolically of Christ Who is exalted above His fellows (Num. 20:8; 2 Sam. 22:2; Isa. 32:2; 1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:8). After Peter's noble confession of Jesus as "the Christ the Son of the living God" which great truth was a revelation given him from heaven, rather than from men, Jesus said unto him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My church" (Matt. 16:15-18). Such, at least, is the English translation; but in the Greek Jesus said, Thou art Petros, meaning "a piece of the rock," or "a stone," and upon this petra, meaning, "the Rock itself" I will build "My Church." Thus it was not upon Peter but upon Himself than Whom there is no other foundation that Christ promised to build His Church. This was as Peter understood the message as he was very careful to declare (1 Pet. 2:4-9).

If Protestants would only learn to distinguish between things that differ in the Scriptures, they would know that the keys of the Kingdom, promised to Peter on that same occasion, did not bestow upon that apostle any primacy in the Church. Thus by an intelligent use of the Scriptures they would deprive the papacy of one of its chief arguments in support of its system of pagan idolatry, and its blasphemous assumption that its pope is the head of the True Church.

Here then the overcomer is to receive a white stone (psephos), or "a little pebble," as a token to identify him as a piece of the Stone, or Rock. And in the stone a new name, (THE BRIDE OF CHRIST) written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it (Rom. 8:16, 17). Such then is the blessed promise to the overcomer who dwells in the world, even where Satan hath his seat, and who lives amidst conditions such as existed in the Church in Pergamos as described in the epistle.

Third Period of Church History, A.D. 311-590

And what has the Church historian to say regarding conditions that prevailed in the third period of the Church's history? Dr. Schaff describes the period as "Christianity in union with the Graeco-Roman empire, and amid the storms of the great migration of nations. From Constantine the Great to Pope Gregory I, A.D. 311-590."

This it is declared was a period of reaction that followed the terrible reign of persecution that had secured a martyr's crown for so great a multitude of Christians. Both the Church and the world were weary of persecution, and each sought to discover some way to reconcile Christianity with heathenism, or at least to lessen the natural antagonism between them. Of course the historian merely notes the fact and offers no comment. But it can be added that such an effort was attempting the impossible as saith the Scriptures:

> "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple

> of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6: 14-18).

However, it is claimed, the conversion of the emperor Constantine secured for the Church an acceptability and a popularity such as she had never before enjoyed in the eyes of the world, which thereupon began to manifest a desire and a willingness to become identified with the Church as members. To this courtship the Church showed but little aversion; rather she encouraged it by cultivating and exhibiting a more friendly disposition toward her heathen neighbors; and by being less severe and uncompromising in her condemnation and denunciations of the evils to be found in and that were practiced by the world. Further, the Church was not so exacting in the requirements imposed upon those who sought her fellowship, and thus made it less difficult to be received into her communion.

The Church therefore greatly increased in numbers, power, wealth and influence; the number of mere professors also greatly multiplied, and as a result the Church became more worldly. The marriage also between Christians and non-professors was practiced without calling forth much opposition, and gradually the members of the Church, at least many of them, conformed to the customs of their heathen neighbors until it became difficult to discover in their conduct and conversation anything that would distinguish such professors from the more respectable among the worldlings.

It was during this very period also that many of the doctrines held by the Church began to be questioned; and the resultant religious controversies led to their being modified to a greater or less extent in order to adapt them to the prevailing conviction of the Church of that day and age. Further, those in the fellowship of the Church who considered that a clear distinction should be drawn between the clergy and the laity; and who insisted that the former should have a standing and honor to exalt them above their brethren also increased in

number and in influence until they finally obtained their object. An order of the clergy was therefore established, which later became the foundation for the various orders of the episcopacy, and ultimately for the papacy.

Such is a very brief summary of the conditions which the historian finds existing in this third period of the Church's history. And who will fail to observe the close resemblance between the facts of history and the pen picture furnished by an inspired apostle in which are faithfully revealed the conditions discovered in the Church in Pergamos? The difference that deserves most to excite wonder and amazement is that while the former are facts which historians find and record, the latter are the predictions of a lonely prisoner on the isle of Patmos who five hundred years before the events occurred was commanded by the Glorified Son of Man "to write the things which shall be hereafter."

Chapter X

THE PROPHECY CONCERNING THE VISIBLE CHURCH (*Continued*)

FOURTH AND FIFTH EPISTLES

The Church in Thyatira

> "And unto the angel of the Church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and THY WORKS; and the last to be more than the first" (ch. 2: 18, 19).

The Son of God deserves an attentive hearing especially when as here described His appearance is suggestive of righteous indignation, and also the power to tread down His enemies. The spirit or angel of this Church is commended for several Christian virtues; also for works and works: the former evidently works of faith, the latter presumably self-imposed works, and these last were more than the first.

That Woman Jezebel

> "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (ch. 2: 20-23).

However, this Church is severely reproved because of that woman Jezebel. There are two Jezebels mentioned in the Bible: The one was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, the heathen wife of Ahab. To please her, Ahab built an altar to Baal, and did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all of the kings of Israel that were before him (I Kings 16:3-11). To destroy more completely true religion, and to compel Israel to accept the religion of Baal with all its unchastities and beastialities, this woman Jezebel slew the Lord's prophets. Her husband reigned but it was Jezebel who ruled with a high hand and who destroyed mercilessly those who stood in her way until she herself died a violent death.

The other is that woman Jezebel, the false prophetess mentioned in this epistle, and she might well have been the twin sister of the wife of Ahab. She also was a heathen with no respect for decency, and her chief desire was to betray God's people into sin, and to turn them away from the living and true God that they might become worshipers of idols. No person of such a name has been identified with the history of this church or of this period. But the name Jezebel means "unmarried," and it is a fitting symbol of any unchaste woman, or harlot, such as the teachings and works of that woman Jezebel prove her to have been. Hence she and her not less guilty partners were threatened with great tribulation except they repented of their deeds; and her children also were to be killed with death. Thus all the churches would know that the Son of God is the Searcher of hearts, and that He will give unto every one according to their works.

> "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces: even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (ch. 2:24-29).

In the fellowship of the Church in Thyatira not everyone had been seduced by the sorceries of that lewd woman and false prophetess. There was a large company which was represented by the angel or spirit of that church that held themselves aloof from the teachings or doctrines of that Jezebel; hence they had not known the depths of Satan. Their opposition and resistance to the seductive influences of Jezebel had probably aroused her hatred and called forth her fury against them, and thus they had suffered from her malignity about all that it was possible for flesh to endure. No other burden therefore was to be laid upon such, but they are exhorted by Christ to hold fast until His return.

The overcomer is required to keep Christ's works unto the end. Thus "My works" (v. 26), are placed in opposition to "thy works" (v. 19). It is evident that this Church organization had its own works that were other and different from Christ's works, and it is further evident that the works of this organization were regarded as more important than Christ's works; hence there were more of them (v. 19). But it is Christ's works that the overcomer is to keep unto the end, and this is the only epistle in which there is found this added requirement of the overcomer, who if successful is promised the privilege of reigning with Christ (Ps. 2:9), over the nations, and he is also to receive the morning star which is symbolic of Christ Himself (Rev. 22:16). In other words, as the Bridegroom Christ will give Himself unto His Bride which is the True Church. The promises, therefore, made to the overcomer in this Church are that among the redeemed he will be a member of the Bride class, and as a joint-heir with Christ he will be permitted to share not only in the inheritance, but also in the administration of the affairs of the Kingdom when it is established on the earth.

The Candlestick Removed Out of His Place

For the first time, also, in these epistles the exhortation, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," follows the promise to the overcomer. The reason is evident; in the message to the Ephesian Church the warning

is given, "I will remove thy candlestick out of His place, except thou repent" (v. 5). These several churches were themselves candlesticks (ch. 1:20), to give the light of truth to the world. But they could shed forth light only as they received light from the Holy Spirit, Who therefore is symbolized here as the candlestick of these churches, or the light and truth Giver. Ephesus failed to heed the divine warning; she did not repent. Hence the sin of giving to Christ something less than supreme love continued in the Church to influence and to determine the conduct of her members. Thus in Smyrna some of the members represented the synagogue of Satan; while in Pergamos the many were in the world where Satan had his seat, and they were content to depend on an arm of flesh, the civil power, for their protection and safety. Now in Thyatira the world, having been given the opportunity, had taken possession of the Church, and therefore the unheeded warning became a reality in the experience of the Visible Church of that period,—the Candlestick was removed out of His place. Hence no longer dwelling in the midst of the Church, the Holy Spirit now occupies a place that suggests that He is about to withdraw altogether from the fellowship of the Church unless she repents of her sins. However, far from repenting, Thyatira suffers in her fellowship that woman Jezebel the false prophetess. And thus, like leaven, sin spreads until the whole becomes leaven. The sin which had not been put away at Ephesus, is observed to be at work in each of the other churches, and becomes more and more easily discerned. In Smyrna there is the blasphemy of pretenders who are nothing less than a synagogue of Satan; in Pergamos there are those who hold the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes, who live where Satan's seat is, and put their confidence in an arm of flesh; and now in Thyatira the Church suffers that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce God's servants to worship idols, and continues that woman in her communion even though she refused to repent, and persisted in the practice of her sorceries. What wonder then, if the Holy Spirit being thus dishonored, should serve notice that He was ready to depart from such company!

The Use of Sacred Numbers Again to Be Noted

Then, it should not be overlooked, that this change occurs after the third epistle, and continues through the next four epistles. Three is the number that stands for the Trinity or for a divine work; four is the number that stands for the earth; and seven, the sum of three plus four, stands for dispensational fulness and completion. A careful study of these seven epistles reveals that in each Church, or in each period of the One Visible Church, there is present both the good and the evil, both the true followers of Christ and also the mere professors. But only in the first three epistles do the true disciples appear to predominate in these churches; hence the Spirit dwells in their midst. In the last four epistles the mere nominal disciples are in control, and so the Spirit, being dishonored, no longer dwells in the midst of a worldly Church, and serves warning that He will withdraw altogether unless there be repentance and reformation.

Fourth Period of Church History. A. D. 590-1294.

Having considered what the epistle to the Church in Thyatira reveals, we turn again to the Church historians to learn the conditions which they found and record as having existed during this fourth period. Dr. Schaff treats this as two periods and deals with the subjects of "Christianity planted among the nations, and the complete development and ascendency of the papal hierarchy. From Pope Gregory I to Boniface XIII, A. D. 590-1294."

The great migration of nations, discussed by historians in the previous period, had not only injuriously affected the Church, but had also threatened to destroy the civilization of that day and to reduce all society to a state of barbarism. That the barbarians did not succeed in reducing all society to their level was due in large measure to the work of pious monks who were members of the various religious orders that had sprung up within the Church. These monks preserved much of the literature of that day from wanton destruction by hiding it away in their cloisters. They also kept learning alive, although for the greater part it was limited chiefly to the members of these various orders. They also are given well deserved

credit for the work they accomplished in spreading the gospel among the barbarians often at the risk of their lives.

However, according to Dr. Schaff, that same period witnessed *"the end of APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY, and the beginning of medieval Catholicism."* The END of Apostolic Christianity! One may be excused, therefore, if he inquires, What has become of "the twin parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven?" The spirit of Nicolaitanism that insisted on the establishment of various orders of priests or clergy, had triumphed. Hence in the Church the brethren of the One Master had been divided into groups of which one group, the clergy, was assumed to be in every respect the superior in importance and in dignity to the other group, the laity, or the common people. Out of the spirit of that first group developed the various orders of priests and the bishop. Then finally the Pope himself emerged and the Church of the papacy with his satanic majesty at its head became the successor in position, power and influence of what formerly had been the Church of Jesus Christ. All these developments had their beginning in the third period. The fourth period opens with Pope Gregory I already established as head of the papal Church, and with medieval Catholicism substituted for Apostolic Christianity.

It would be difficult to imagine any greater sin of which the Church could have been guilty than the sin of making some man, other than the Man Christ Jesus, head of the Church, and the sin also of determining what should be the doctrines and practices of the Church, agreeable to the convictions of a majority of the professed Christians of that day, rather than according to the Word and will of God. However, the results of such sins at the beginning were comparatively insignificant and harmless; but later, the enormity of the evil was plainly evidenced, and the results were horrible almost beyond the power of language to describe.

The Papal Church at the Height of Its Power

The departure of the Church of the Papacy from the teachings of Christ and of His inspired apostles was a very gradual process, and at the beginning of the fourth period of Church history much of the pure gospel was retained and preached

earnestly and faithfully by priests and monks. The latter especially were tireless in their efforts to spread the gospel. Often at the risk of life they planted the seeds of truth among the various nations, and succeeded in winning great numbers of the heathen to profess their faith in Christ, and to unite with the Church of the Papacy. The historians make special mention of the zeal and earnestness of the monks, who were in the various Church orders, in proclaiming the gospel among the nations of earth during most of this fourth period.

And during this same period they also describe the complete development and ascendency of the papal hierarchy with the gradual change of doctrines, the corruption of worship, and the extension of the practice of idolatry. And side by side with this departure from the true faith went the corruption of morals and the practice of unmentionable wickedness. Priests and nuns alike were shamelessly immoral; they professed the virtue of celibates (the unmarried), and practiced after the manner of Jezebel, the false prophetess, who taught and seduced God's servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. Those who will take time to read for themselves Schaff's History of the Christian Church in the periods that record the rise of the Papacy to its position of power will be well repaid, and it is hardly possible that intelligent readers of said history, or of any other Church history, will fail to recognize the facts which history supplies as a most complete fulfilment of the conditions described in the epistle to the Church in Thyatira.

Dean Trench on the Epistles to the Seven Churches

In his work on the epistles to the seven churches, Dean Trench, while he rejects and argues at great length against accepting these epistles as a prophetic forecast of the history of the One Visible Church of Christ during this age, nevertheless admits that the conditions described in the churches in Smyrna and in Thyatira answer fully and completely to the events of history that have been recorded. He further admits that these historic events transpired at the exact time to meet the requirements if these epistles were prophetic. However, he regards these facts as merely remarkable coincidents rather

than as proof of the prophetic character of these letters to the seven churches. But other not less eminent Christian scholars have seen in the events of history already recorded the complete and marvelous fulfilment of the conditions described in all of the first six of these epistles; hence they believe them to be prophetic and they look confidently for the not less literal fulfilment, in due time, of the seventh and last epistle.

Since the scholars do not agree among themselves, Christians generally are at liberty to take either side of the question, and to decide according to their own judgment, as to which side is the nearer to the truth. But it will be well for such to do a little reading of Church history for themselves, comparing the facts of history with what is written in these epistles; thus they will be better able to reach an intelligent decision, and at the same time they will avoid the danger of having their understanding darkened and their judgment unduly influenced by the controversial arguments of scholarly opponents.

The Church in Sardis

The fifth epistle is sent to the Church in Sardis.

> "And unto the angel of the Church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (ch. 3:1-3).

The seven spirits describe the One Holy Spirit in the plenitude of His power and sufficiency for His dispensational work. These seven spirits are mentioned as before the throne of God (ch. 1:4); they are not mentioned in the inspired pen portraiture of the Glorified Son of Man, but here Christ claims to have them, or the One Holy Spirit Whom Jesus sent to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come, and also to comfort His people, to be their Teacher and to lead them into all truth. The seven stars are the spirits of

the several churches, or as personified, their angels. These Christ has also in his power and they will either be rewarded or punished according as their works appear. The spirit of the Church in Sardis was dead which reveals that the Holy Spirit, Whose indwelling assures life to every true Church as a spiritual organization, had entirely departed from the representative majority of that Church which therefore had a name to live, but which nevertheless was merely a dead Church. If it be understood and recognized that the Church in Sardis is one and the same organization, only at a later period of her history, as the Church in Thyatira which suffered the presence and permitted the abominable works of that woman Jezebel, then it will be less surprising to learn that the Spirit had withdrawn and that the Church consequently was dead.

Still, even in such a Church there were some things that yet remained and that were worth preserving. But in such a mass of festering corruption, false doctrines, and idolatrous practices, even the worth while things that remained were ready to die. Hence that Church is exhorted to be watchful and she is solemnly warned that her works have not been found perfect before God.

It is the teaching of the papacy that man is justified by his own works, and it is claimed that some members of that Church who have been sainted have piled up works of righteousness far beyond their own needs. And the priests pretend that at a price they can secure the merits of these works for the benefit of those who have no works of righteousness of their own, but it is always provided that these less fortunate ones have the money to pay for obtaining these merits. Such works, however, are not of a character to help any one; for not even the best of them are perfect before God. Christ therefore desired this Church to remember the faith, or teaching, received and heard from inspired apostles and to hold it fast. At the same time this Church had great need to repent of having accepted other doctrines in exchange for the true faith. Failure to watch her course, and to amend her conduct was dangerous because however she might take comfort to herself in the thought of peace and safety, still sudden destruction would overtake her, and she would then be aroused from her dream

of security when it was too late to escape the consequences of her folly.

A Few Worthy Names in Sardis

Such was the condition of that Church in general, but among her members a few honorable exceptions were found:

> "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy" (ch. 3:4).

Probably it was the presence of these comparatively few names of Christians in that dead Church that explains and accounts for the worth while things that yet remained, but that needed to be strengthened because they were ready to die. It would be next to impossible even for a true Christian to live in the fellowship of spiritually dead professors and not to suffer more or less contamination, and this would keep one back in his own spiritual growth and development. But the loving and gracious Saviour does not require the impossible from any one; He does not expect as much from babes as from the more mature, nor as much from the less gifted as from the more gifted. Hence, while the few names in Sardis were not perfect, still they are commended for not having defiled their garments. This is merely a recognition of evil from which they had refrained rather than of good deeds they had performed, nevertheless they shall not lose their reward, but are counted worthy to walk with Christ.

> "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (ch. 3:5, 6).

The overcomer is assured white raiment, or the righteousness of saints; also that his name shall remain in the book of life, and so he will not be hurt of the second death. Before the Father and His angels his name will be confessed and thus he will share in the reward of glory. Here then is the picture of a Church that is spiritually dead and morally corrupt. But

remaining in her fellowship there are a few who have not partaken of the deeds of the many or shared in their evil doings; therefore they will be permitted to escape the judgments threatened against all the workers of iniquity, and be accounted worthy to walk with Christ.

The Fifth Period of Church History. A. D. 1294-1648.

In this period, which Dr. Schaff treats as two epochs, he deals with the subject of "Christianity under the decay of medieval Catholicism; the preparation for and also the evangelical Reformation, and the Roman Catholic reaction. From Boniface VIII to the treaty of Westphalia, A. D. 1294-1648."

According to the historians the Church of the papacy continued to increase in the number of her members; also in her wealth and influence until she became the most powerful institution on the continent of Europe. Even the nations meekly submitted to her despotic control, and she was able to crown and uncrown kings at her pleasure. So absolute was her supremacy that the emperor, Henry IV of Germany who had offended the Pope, was required to wait three days barefooted standing in the snow outside the door of the castle of Canossa, before he could obtain an audience, make amends for his disregard of the Pope's authority, and once again secure the right to the throne from which he had been deposed.

Keeping step with this rise to power and authority corruption also increased rapidly in the papal Church, which was ever at the service of the highest bidder. That Church even sold indulgences that for a price permitted one to commit any sin or crime he desired with the assurance that no guilt would be attached to the same. Popes, priests, nuns and people generally led immoral and licentious lives to a degree that rivaled the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the midst of such a godless Church, reformatory movements were inaugurated by the Waldenses, Wycliff, Huss and others. The Papacy replied to such attempts at reformation by establishing the Inquisition, and by arresting, persecuting and putting to death those suspected of taking part in such movements. After a time this wickedness and abuse of power caused the Church to lose her grip upon the multitudes; then

nations, once submissive to the tyranny of the Church, began to throw off the yoke of despotism. The decay of medieval Catholicism rapidly advanced; all attempts at reform failed; the Papal Church was in a most corrupt and superstitious condition when Luther arose and inaugurated the Reformation in Germany. His lead was followed by Zwingli and Calvin in Switzerland; and shortly thereafter the Reformation spread to England also. The great power and influence of the Church of the papacy had not entirely departed but were considerably diminished, and to the same degree have never since been regained.

As a means to offset the aggression of Protestantism, the Jesuits were organized and established. And the twin principles of that order, namely, "the end justifies the means," and "ignorance is the mother of devotion," have ever since very largely determined the policy and conduct of that Church, which apparently is incapable of any true reform under the leadership of the hierarchy with the Jesuits, for the greater part of the time, continuing as the power behind the throne of the popes.

The False Doctrines of the Papacy Enslave Many

There are no doubt still in the membership of that Church many sincere believers in Christ as their chief hope of salvation, but for the most part her adherents are mere idolaters who are in complete subjection to the priesthood. This result is secured by the false doctrines of purgatory and the mass, and by the power claimed by the priests to be able to forgive sins which they profess to do but only for a price to be paid to them. And for a further money consideration they pretend to be able to lessen the degree and to shorten the period of the suffering of those who have passed from this life into purgatory. This is a place for which there is no Scripture, and which is pure invention, as also is the professed power to work miracles. And the powers claimed for the priesthood are seldom or never exercised unless the priests are well paid for their services.

In brief, then, these are the conditions that existed during this period as the facts are found and recorded by the different

Church historians. The papal Church was morally corrupt and spiritually dead. And yet among her members were those whom Christ accepted as true Christians. Such as these had inaugurated at different times reform movements, but without success. At length those who could no longer endure to be identified with such gross wickedness, superstition and idolatry withdrew from that fellowship and organized the Church of the Protestant Reformation.

Chapter XI

THE PROPHECY CONCERNING THE VISIBLE CHURCH (*Concluded*)

THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH EPISTLES

The Church in Philadelphia

> "And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (ch. 3:7-9).

The description given of Christ in the fifth epistle, as already noted, and that here given, and that found also in the last epistle mark them as differing from the four former epistles in this respect, namely: In the first four epistles the Speaker describes Himself by the exclusive use of expressions which John employs when he records the vision he had received of the Glorified Son of Man (Rev. 1:13-18), while in the last three epistles the Speaker describes Himself by the use of other and different expressions.

A Significant Departure from the Rule

This is no mere accident. There is some meaning in this change, and it is a fair inference, to say the least, that Christ's message, partly in the fifth epistle and entirely in the last two epistles is meant for an organization of Christians that is wholly distinct and separate from the Church addressed in the first four epistles, and in part in the fifth epistle. The Visible

Church as founded by Christ and His apostles is charged with having left her first love; then second, with having in her fellowship false professors who were of the synagogue of Satan; third, with dwelling in the world, even where Satan's seat is, and with admitting to fellowship those who held false doctrines, especially the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which Christ hated; fourth, with opening her door to admit the entrance of that woman Jezebel, the false prophetess and harlot who was permitted to teach her false doctrines within the Church, and who with her paramours was allowed to take control of the Church as a visible organization. Thus, as any thing other than a surprising result, that Church is, fifth, declared to be dead, even though she had a name to live. In each of these epistles the sin is pointed out, the Church is called upon to repent and duly warned of the consequences if she failed to make her doings right. However, instead of putting away her sin the Church persisted in her evil way and grew worse and worse until as a spiritual organization Christ pronounced her DEAD.

The Seed of the Reformed Church

But in the midst of this dead Church, the church of the Papacy, there were a few whom Christ mentioned, not as being members of that spiritually dead organization, but rather as "a few names" (v. 4). Such were recognized as worthy to walk with Christ, but nothing more is said of them in that fifth epistle. It seems evident that the few names represented the Reformers who later separated themselves entirely from the Papal Church; and probably for them, the first departure from the rule occurred when the Speaker announced Himself as "He that hath the seven spirits of God" (Rev. 1:4; 3:1). This would encourage those who trusted in Christ to understand that they should not lack for the gift and blessing of the Holy Spirit even though they were identified with a spiritually dead organization. And the announcement of the fact that Christ had the seven spirits, or the Holy Spirit in dispensational fulness, is the first departure from the description John gives of the glorified Son of Man. The other expression, "He hath the seven stars," is in John's description of The Christ glorified, and it served as a reminder not only to the unfaithful and

dead Church of the papacy that her angel, or spirit, was in Christ's hand, and in due time would be required to answer to Him, but it was also a similar warning given to the seed of the new organization,—the Church of the Protestant Reformation.

The Church of the Protestant Reformation

In the sixth epistle, therefore, Sardis, the dead Church and her members, being wholly rejected by Christ, are referred to as "the synagogue of Satan." And it is evidently to a new Church organization in Philadelphia, the Church of brotherly love, that this message is sent. The Speaker reminds this Church that beyond all that He appears to be in the vision John received of Him, He also is holy, and so will not endure sin in His Church; further, He is true, as the former Visible Church which had become the synagogue of Satan demonstrated, because it was now rejected by Him. Christ also assures and encourages this new organization which has kept His word, and has not denied His name, that although it has but little strength, and although it is opposed by the synagogue of Satan, still He has the key of David, or the power and authority of the Kingdom, and the right was His also either to open or to shut the door of opportunity, privilege and service. Hence no man, not even the head of the synagogue of Satan, had either the power or the authority to change His decision.

If this understanding of the Scriptures be correct it shows that the Church of the Protestant Reformation was not only predicted to be established in due time, but also that it would be recognized by Christ as His Church; that to it His message was addressed, and thus it becomes the duly acknowledged and only rightful successor of the Church founded by Christ and nurtured by His apostles, which organization had degenerated into the synagogue of Satan, and which therefore Christ had rejected.

Sacred Numbers Confirm the Explanation as True

Here again sacred numbers would seem to confirm the correctness of this explanation for the change, or for the departure from the rule. The number five stands for human incompleteness and insufficiency. And the first five epistles are sent to a

Church which finally substitutes her works, which are not found perfect before God, for the perfect work of Christ; hence that Church was dead, even though she still had a name to live. And in the sixth epistle, six being the number of evil, and of Satan, that Church is branded by Christ Himself as "the synagogue of Satan." While the last two epistles, two representing the Covenant between the Father and His Son, are sent to the duly recognized successor of the Church which Christ had rejected. Thus is fulfilled the promise made in that Covenant: "A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation (people, stock or race). They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this (Ps. 22:30, 31: Isa. 53:10).

And to this new organization Christ provides the open door of opportunity for service and privilege. The former organization had likewise enjoyed her opportunity but had failed miserably to improve it. Now to the Church in Philadelphia the opportunity is given, and it is for herself to decide the issue; for none can deprive her of this privilege which her Lord has granted unto her. That open door can mean nothing less than the opportunity to fulfil the mission for which the Church was instituted,—the mission to preach the gospel unto all nations, and to be Christ's witness everywhere and among all people.

As an organization, the synagogue of Satan, or Rome Papal, will perish miserably. But many of those who are in her membership, and who represent her as did the false professors in the Church in Smyrna, will become true converts to Christ. And it is such as these who in due time will come and worship before the feet of the true Church. The complete fulfilment of that promise awaits the coming of the Kingdom age when the True Church will be made manifest as the Bride of Christ, and share with Him the honors and glories of the Kingdom.

> "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God,

and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (ch. 3:10-13).

The hour of temptation has reference to the great tribulation, or to the days of the vengeance of our God that will be visited upon earth dwellers, and true Christians are promised that they will be permitted to escape the terrible judgments that will be sent at that time upon all evil doers who dwell upon the earth.

The Reformed Church Duly Warned

However, it appears necessary that those in the new Church organization, even though they are true believers, should be duly warned and exhorted. They must hold fast to what they have and not permit any man to take their crown. Man was not able to take from that Church her God given opportunity; for that depended on Christ alone. But man is able to take the victor's crown from the Church, for the possession of that crown depends on herself, on how near she walks to Christ, and on how faithfully she engages in His service.

Since the temple of God is a spiritual organization consisting of all true believers, a pillar in that temple is one who occupies a position of importance and leadership. That part of the promise to the overcomer is for present fulfilment, and the honor will be permanent,—he shall go no more out. To write upon him the name of God means to make him a partaker of the divine nature. And as the city of God, new Jerusalem, is a symbol of the glorified Church of the redeemed, the promise means that the overcomer shall have a place in, and be a part of the True Church, or the Church in mystery, whose new name will be "The Bride, the Lamb's Wife."

Here then are the conditions in, and the promises given to the Church in Philadelphia. There is here a newly organized Church, with but little strength, before which is set an open door which no man can shut. She is exposed to many dangers and temptations because of false professors who are of the synagogue of Satan, and who possess the spirit of persecutors

as did like persons in Smyrna; hence she needs the exhortation to hold fast lest she lose her crown. Those described as of the synagogue of Satan were ever persecutors of true Christians; their teachings and example probably had prepared the way for the departure from the faith once for all delivered unto the saints, and also for the organization of the Church of the papacy with her false doctrines, her idolatrous practices and her shameful impurities in which her members generally, including the hierarchy and even the popes, indulged until to read the record is sufficient to put decency to the blush.

The Sixth Period of Church History. A. D. 1648-1880.

The eighth and part of his ninth period of Church History, Dr. Schaff defines as "The Age of polemic orthodoxy and exclusive confessionalism with the spread of infidelity, and the revival of Christianity in Europe and America, with missionary efforts encircling the globe." Dr. Schaff's eighth and ninth epochs cover what is believed to be the sixth period, and it includes the time when infidelity appeared within the Protestant Church under the guise of liberalism and modernism, and when there followed the repudiation, by several theological professors and pulpiteers, of many of the foundation truths of Christianity. This period therefore extends from the treaty of Westphalia to the first appearance of German rationalism within the Protestant Church, A. D. 1648-1880.

The historian records, that after the Reformed Church had secured a firm footing in the several countries of Europe and America, instead of uniting in brotherly love, and instead of testifying against the corruptions, the doctrinal errors, and the idolatrous and licentious practices of the Roman Catholic Church and the hierarchy, and instead of uniting to preach the pure gospel which was held in common, the Church of the Reformation was divided into little groups. And the several groups, instead of all professing to be of Christ, claimed rather to be of Luther, or of Calvin or of Zwingli or of Huss or of Knox, and not one of these several groups had much strength compared with what they might have possessed had they all been united.

Schism in the Reformed Church

On all the great essential truths, in so far as these had been recovered by the Protestant Church of that day from the faithful study of the Bible, and as said truth had been cherished by the Apostolic Church, the Reformed Church was united. She was faithful also in proclaiming the same and in testifying against the false doctrines and evil practices of the papal church. But unfortunately the Reformers allowed themselves to become hopelessly divided over certain words of doctrines. The great importance of the truth held in common was not so much considered, while the importance of their differences was greatly magnified. As a result much precious time was worse than wasted for it was employed in carrying on theological disputes and in striving about words to no profit, which only engendered more strife and which caused the Reformers to assume an attitude of bitterness and even of hatred toward each other.

The Open Door Neglected

Thus precious time was lost and the open door was neglected while the Protestants fought the Catholics, and the Catholics fought the Protestants; The Calvinists quarreled with the Lutherans, with the Armenians, and with other Protestant sects which all in turn quarrel with the Calvinists and with each other, to their own harm and to the lasting reproach of Protestant Christianity. This bitter strife continued until the end of the Thirty Years War, which was confined to the Continent, and ended with the signing of the treaty of Westphalia which established the territorial boundaries of the Protestant and Catholic nations. Even then the disputes between Protestants concerning questions of doctrines and of Church policy, did not cease, but were carried on with unabated zeal, and caused much feeling to be engendered between brethren, while the great world of lost and perishing humanity, to which Christ commissioned His Church to go and preach the gospel, was almost wholly neglected.

The Foundation of Faith Threatened by Deism and Rationalism

As a result the general condition of the people was irreligious. Deism began to prevail to an alarming extent in England under the leadership of Hobbes, Shaftesbury, Tindal, Bolingbroke, Hume and Gibbon. Then followed German rationalism, based on the teachings of Wolfe and Semler, which quickly spread with the fury of a consuming flame, and for a time threatened the very foundations of the Protestant Christian Church. However, such attacks from without on the common faith served to draw the Protestant sects to unite for its defense, and standing shoulder to shoulder with each other in contending for the faith and in resisting the attacks of deism, rationalism and infidelity, the Reformers gradually cultivated a respect for each other, and after a while seem to have made the discovery that they were forbidden to strive about words to no profit and were commanded to love one another.

Missionary Efforts Circling the Globe

A revival of true Christianity followed both in Europe and in America. And calling to remembrance the Great Commission which required the gospel to be preached to every nation, the eyes of the Reformed Church were opened about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and she beheld the opportunity for missionary activity that challenged her best endeavors. For this missionary work the door was open before the Church, and it has ever since remained opened.

While the Church has sadly neglected to improve all the splendid opportunities which that open door afforded, still it remains open and no man can shut it. The Church entered that door then; and it was not long until in every land the heralds of the Cross of Jesus Christ were proclaiming the unsearchable riches of His grace among the nations. And the True Church has ever since continued to carry on that missionary work with greater or less zeal and fidelity.

The Reformed Church Has Grown Great and Influential

Not only the united efforts required for this common task set before the Church of evangelizing the world; but also the

Evangelical Alliance further helped to promote the unity of orthodox Christians in all parts of the world, and to a corresponding degree the victory over skepticism. Thus notwithstanding the many divisions in the body of Christ which still continue, and which have made impossible among Protestant Christians the unity for which the Master prayed, nonetheless the Church of the Reformation has greatly increased in numbers, in riches, in power and in influence. But with this material growth and development the Church's zeal for truth, and for carrying on her works of faith and labors of love has not always kept pace, but has lagged noticeably behind on many occasions.

Desire for World's Approval

The Church has shown less concern for her growth in grace and in her knowledge of Christ Jesus, than she has shown the desire to secure a position of preëminence and of commanding influence in the sight of the great and wise men of the world. This attitude encouraged the revival of German rationalism, which interested itself in the sphere of Biblical criticism, and which left its deepest mark on subsequent theological development. However, the rationalists are far from being at agreement among themselves; they still differ regarding the correct method to be employed in the study of the Bible, and also in the conclusions reached concerning its teachings, and as regards, also, how much or how little of its teachings can be most surely believed. Thus many of the contentions of self-confident and aggressive rationalism have long since mutually destroyed each other. But the later or newer criticism of this rationalistic sort, as one writer states it, "without utterly denying or attempting to overthrow the foundations of religion, makes such concessions to the enemy as tend to subvert the faith; it admits the thin edge of a wedge that pressed home will rend and destroy the fabric." This school of rationalists "rely more or less exclusively and blameworthily, on mere human reason, instead of simply, frankly and fully accepting the dicta of the divine word."

The Exaltation of the Reason

This is the more dangerous method, since no objection can be raised against the use of human reason in the study of the Bible. The error lies in the *exclusive use* of mere human reason, without placing any dependence on the Spirit of God, as the divine Teacher and Guide, Who only can lead honest inquirers into a knowledge and understanding of the things which are undiscoverable by the natural man. This method therefore contradicts the truth that "no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11).

However, the appeal of this rationalistic school, and the apparently "sweet reasonableness" of its method, fastened their grip upon many of the scholars within the Church. And as a result opinions soon began to be heard in sermons and to be expounded in books by theological professors in favor of what they were pleased to call "liberalism," or "modernism"; and these opinions either broadly hinted that the inspiration and inerrency of the Bible was only a myth, or a superstition that had come down from the Dark ages, or they boldly denied these doctrines; and they claimed that to believe them was no less a folly than to substitute a fallible book of human origin and to hold its teachings as of supreme authority, in place of a man made pope whose opinions were assumed to partake of infallibility. And thus

> "Man, proud man!
> Clothed with a little brief authority,
> Plays such fantastic tricks
> As make the angels weep."

And there are not a few of God's professed people in the several denominations who love to have it so. They have little difficulty today in securing for their spiritual guides and teachers men with "itching ears," who are far more anxious to learn what will please the people to whom they minister, than they are faithful as ambassadors for Jesus Christ to preach the preaching that He bids them whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear to hear.

Infidelity Boring from Within

At first such opinions from professed Christian scholars called forth some protest; but the expression of such opinions continued and increased. Then a little later they were followed by the denial of the Mosaic authorship of Genesis; and then the authorship of other books of the Bible was called in question. By these same rationalistic scholars in the Church the claim also was put forward that many statements found in both the Old and the New Testaments were interpolations, or myths, or mere folk lore of a primitive people. Next there was proclaimed the discovery that Paul, the chiefest of the apostles, contradicted many of the teachings of Jesus Christ. Thus the spirit of infidelity was permitted to grow and to develop within the Protestant Christian Church until in theological seminaries, universities, colleges, and pulpits, there were to be found men who were considered orthodox teachers, even though they denied that the Bible was in any special sense an inspired book, denied the Genesis account of the creation of man, denied the Virgin birth and deity of our Lord, denied the need and the efficacy of the blood of Christ to atone for sin, denied that Jesus would ever come again to this earth in person, or in any sense other than He has been coming through all the Christian centuries, in the onward march of education, civilization and brotherhood. Thus these infidel scholars would eliminate entirely from Christian teaching the Christ Who died for sins. And for the Bible they propose to substitute the human reason as the only sure foundation on which to build religion, and as the only safe guide to follow for those who desire to measure up to the highest possibilities to be attained by the evolution of the human race.

Many in the Church Today Indorse Hypocrisy

And there are multitudes of professed Christians, having good standing in the Church, who love such teachings, and who have no patience with, or use for those who teach any thing contrary to what they choose to believe as agreeable to their own imperfect reason and darkened understanding.

If one should think the above statement to be untrue or

greatly exaggerated, let him consider that in the 1923 General Assembly of the great Presbyterian Church U. S. A., the question as to whether men who held and taught such views as above mentioned should be permitted to minister in Presbyterian pulpits was decided in the negative, but only by the small majority of fifteen votes; at least according to the account of that action as published in the daily press. And among the denominations that Church is regarded as conservative.

One may be thankful that the members of Protestant churches are manifesting toward each other a spirit of brotherly love, and are uniting to improve the opportunity of the open door to preach the gospel to heathen nations. But in view of prevailing conditions within the Church herself it is still necessary to stress the exhortation of her divine Lord, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Thus far we have had the cold facts of history to compare with the predictions contained in six of these epistles to the churches. And the facts are submitted in evidence to establish the claim that these epistles are nothing less nor other than a prophetic forecast of the course and conduct of the One Visible Church from the beginning of her history down to the very end of this dispensation of the grace of God. The facts should prove convincing even though the truth is far from being agreeable, and quite the contrary to what we would very much prefer to believe. If, therefore, one believes in the prophetic character of these epistles, there is no escape from the conclusion that the Church age, not less than the times of the Gentiles, is rapidly drawing to a close. Only one more period of Church history,—the seventh and last, remains for future fulfilment. Then the entire prophecy will have been completely and literally fulfilled, the present evil age will have ended, and the Kingdom age will have begun.

The Church of the Laodiceans

> "And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (ch. 3: 14).

We come now to consider the seventh epistle, claimed not only to be prophetic, but also that it will complete the present

dispensational history of the Church. The predictions of this prophecy are being fulfilled right now, in part at least, although its complete fulfilment awaits the future and the coming end of the age. How far, or how near may be the age end none should assume to predict, or even to hazard a guess. It is enough to know that at this very time we are living in the last period of this dispensation of the grace of God.

In some of the early manuscripts this epistle is not addressed to the Church in Laodicea, but rather it is addressed to the Church of the Laodiceans (Greek, Laos, "the people," and dike, "to give judgment," or "to rule"), a very significant change since it would appear as though this epistle were sent to a Church in which the people decided everything for themselves or to the Church of the Democracy, rather than to a Church ruled by her divine head, even Christ.

In calling the attention of that Church to the titles claimed by the Speaker it is as though it were said to this democratic organization, You choose to be the Church of the people: Amen, or so let it be. But as the faithful and true witness I will set before you the results of a man made and ruled Church, and in contrast I present Myself, The Glorified Son of Man, as the beginning of the creation of God.

Lukewarm Professors

> "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth" (ch. 3:15, 16).

This is the first of several charges brought against the angel, or spirit, of this Church. Regarding things spiritual and religious, which should be the chief concern of every true Church, the spirit of this Church of the Democracy neither favors nor opposes. It assumes an attitude of careless indifference toward all such matters as those in which the Church is supposed to be vitally interested, whether they be doctrines or duties,—the duties they owe to themselves, to their brethren and to their Lord, not less than those which they owe to the world of lost humanity,—the perishing at their own door.

Faithful pastors appeal in vain to such a people for their support, and their coöperation in carrying on the great work for which the Church was instituted. A few, a mere handful, will respond, but the great majority are unmoved even by the most earnest and insistent appeals, and the kindliest invitations. The people hear but they simply are not interested in any of these things. For the greater part, they are of the class which Spurgeon called "the oncers." Once a week at most they attend a religious service. Many of this class are not to be seen in the sanctuary more than once a month, and some consider that they can fully satisfy all their religious obligations if they only present themselves on a Communion occasion to observe the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

In such homes there is no family altar, nor do members of the family take time for the study of the Bible, or for meditation on religious subjects, or for communion with God in prayer. They are fully occupied with business, and with worldly amusements,—the card party, the dance, the theater, the club, the socials and the receptions of one kind and another; hence they have no time for Church or for religious work especially, since for the performance of such work, each time they do attend Church, they contribute a nickel, or a whole dime to pay the pastor who is hired to attend to these things for them. Of all such professed Christians the Faithful and True Witness say, "Thou art lukewarm, and I will spue thee out of My mouth."

Self-deceived Professors

However, these Laodicean professors have a very high opinion of themselves, and of their condition:

> "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (ch. 3:17).

Such a feeling of self-complacency and contentment with one's condition places the proud possessor beyond the reach of help or the hope of betterment. The condition of the conscience stricken publican and outcast from society who cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner," is hopeful; but the condition of the proud Pharisee, boastful of what he is, and has, and does; who

thanks God that he is not like others, and who feels no need of repentance nor of divine mercy, is hopeless.

Spiritually Blind and Destitute Professors

The self-deceived professors know not, and so long as they cherish the delusion regarding themselves and their condition it would be impossible to convince them of their great need. Hence they are not likely to believe the charge of the Faithful and True Witness:

> "and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (ch. 3:17).

The actual condition of these Laodiceans was that of spiritual destitution, yet they knew it not. And what a contrast is presented between this Church that is poor in the midst of all its riches, and the Church of Smyrna, that is rich in the midst of its poverty. Surely God's ways are not our ways nor His thoughts our thoughts, but nevertheless He Who sends the message in each case is the Faithful and True Witness Whom it is well for all to believe.

Gracious Advice for Formal Professors

To these lukewarm, self-deceived, spiritually blind and destitute professors in the Church of the Democracy there is given gracious advice even though by the many it is not at all likely to be heeded:

> "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (ch. 3:18).

The obedience of Jesus Christ, even unto death of the Cross, gave merit to His vicarious atonement which is thus, "gold tried in the fire"; and the only medium that will avail those who seek to exchange their souls, from the condition of bondage unto sin and death, to the condition of the life and liberty of God's children. The soul's redemption is precious; for that purpose the gold of commerce will not avail even though one had gained

the whole world. The only medium of exchange by which the desired end can be achieved is the gold tried in the furnace, to be purchased from Christ alone, at the price of faith in Him, in His obedience, and in His atoning sacrifice. Then one will have in his possession and can put on the white raiment, or the righteousness that is by faith, and that only can cover the shame of his imperfections and of his failures to conform to the holy will of God; then also he will have the anointing of the Holy Spirit Who can give sight to eyes that are spiritually blind and Who can make it possible to see light and truth clearly. Such is the gracious advice given by the Saviour to the Laodicean Church, the Visible Church of our own day, in the last period of her dispensational history.

Christ Is Not Willing that Any Should Perish

If any one fails to heed this gracious advice it will not be chargeable to any disinterestedness on the part of Christ. Having preferred His charges against the people-ruled church, the Church of the Democracy, He shows His desire for her welfare and declares:

> "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent" (ch. 3:19).

The charges that place the Church of the Laodiceans in such an unfavorable light have not been made against her by an angry Lord; but rather by the same gracious and compassionate Saviour Who wept over Jerusalem, because His people had neglected their day of opportunity. His rebuke is prompted by His great love, and He will chasten the erring in His Church as a father deals with a wayward child, rather than as a judge deals with a criminal. Therefore the gracious scepter is still held out to this spiritually blind and destitute Church, and the invitation is, Be zealous and repent.

The Place Christ Has in the Democratic Church

In a Church governed by the people themselves, according to their own idea of what a Church ought to be, and which is supported merely while its conduct meets with their approval,

and ministers to their pride and gratification, it would hardly be expected that Christ would hold a very exalted place. And in the Church of the Laodiceans His place is at the door; further it is on the outside of the door where He stands and knocks to be admitted:

> "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (ch. 3:20).

The man-ruled Church will retain the form of godliness, and often attach as much importance to the observance of mere forms as the discredited Pharisee did to the paying of tithes of mint, and anise and cummin. And like the Pharisee also who neglects the real important matters of the law, so the Church of the Democracy leaves Christ, the Head of the Church, outside of its counsels, plans and thoughts. But while greatly dishonored by a Church calling itself by His name, that nevertheless has no more convenient place for Him than outside the door where He is permitted to stand, still Christ waits and patiently pleads for admission.

No Church can decide for any man what shall be his attitude toward and his relationship with Christ. That is a matter that is entirely for self to determine regardless of what others do or may fail to do. Even in a Church governed and conducted to conform to the popular will, and to gain by all means the approval and support of the multitude, without any concern for Christ's approval and support, it is still possible for any man who so chooses to honor his Lord and to enjoy the blessings of His presence and fellowship.

In the Democratic Church in which the people make the Creed to square with their own convictions, and run things in general pretty much to suit their own pleasure and convenience, Christ the Head of the Church, will be pushed aside and receive little or no consideration at all. His word, His will and His authority count for nothing. It is the people's Church. Their money supports it and they intend that the preacher and the choir and everything connected with the Church shall conform to their will and good pleasure; otherwise they will have nothing to do with it. And the love of money, which is the root

of all evil, tempts worldly minded officials to let the unconverted rabble have its own way, and the result is a Church of the people, rather than a Church of Jesus Christ. But even under such untoward conditions a gracious Lord is waiting to bestow His richest blessings upon all and upon each one who will open the door and bid Him welcome. And outside of His own professed Church will be the Master's place and position at the end of the present dispensation. Is it not plain therefore why Jesus should have asked, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Christ's Throne Awaits His Return

> "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (ch. 3:21, 22).

It thus plainly appears that at the every end of the Church age Christ is still seated on His Father's throne, and is not at that time occupying His throne,—the throne of His father David which, according to the promises made through the prophets and the angel Gabriel, belongs to Christ by the gift of God, and which awaits an Occupant until the return of Christ, and the coming of the Kingdom age (Eze. 21:25-27).

Such a forecast of the character and condition of the Visible Church of Christ, at the end of the last period of her history during this present evil age, is certainly not pleasing. It is a picture, the contemplation of which, if we believe in its reality, may well fill the heart with sorrow, and cause the eyes to run down with tears. But it is a picture of things which shall be hereafter, as the facts are declared by the Faithful and True Witness, and to refuse to heed the message, because it is not agreeable to our thought, and because it is contrary to our expectation will be to repeat the folly of God's ancient people of the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah.

Chapter XII

THE UNFULFILLED PROPHECY

THE CHURCH OF THE LAODICEANS

Straws Reveal How the Wind Blows

It is of course impossible to verify the truth of these predictions, as was done in the case of the first six epistles, by an appeal to Church History, because the history of this last period, for the greater part, lies in the future, and has not as yet been written. But straws indicate the direction in which the wind blows, and there are not lacking certain indisputable facts that unmistakably fulfil some at least of these predictions, and suggest the complete fulfilment, in due time, of every one of them.

The Spirit of Democracy in All Lands Today

What then are some of the easily discerned and generally recognized facts to be found today, both in the world and in the Church, that fit into and harmonize with these predictions, and that afford at least indices that point to the present drift of society? It will hardly be questioned by any thoughtful person that the spirit of Democracy is a chief characteristic of the present time. In all lands and on all sides the cry of the rising spirit of Democracy is heard. The daily press and the various magazines all contain accounts of the experiments being made today by many nations with the rule of Democracy. That spirit seems to pervade the very air we breathe. For the past several years thrones have been toppling, kings and queens with their families are being driven into exile, the words, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," were never more appropriate than at the present time and under prevailing conditions. Peoples long oppressed by misrule are rising up and

taking the reins of government into their own hands. By many this fact is hailed with satisfaction. It is an evidence, they say, of the spread of knowledge, the growth of intelligence and the sign of the rapid approach of a higher, better and nobler civilization. Others however are awaiting the results with bated breath. They consider that Democracy is not without its dangers even for persons of intelligence who have been more or less educated and trained to self-government; and they realize that for the ignorant and inexperienced masses of mankind self-government is as unsafe as would be the power of life and death placed in the hands of a little child.

Democracy May Lead to Anarchy

The chief peril arises from the fact that those who have once thrown aside restraint, rebelled against constituted authority and overthrown the existing government, are very likely, if they should fail to realize their desires and expectations, to disintegrate into a mob without retaining even the semblance of organization. Thus they are liable to introduce a reign of anarchy, bloodshed and terror, such as has been witnessed in Russia and in some of the smaller nations of Europe. This Democratic spirit, whether with or without just cause, is apt to resent any form of restraint being placed upon the freedom of persons to act according to their own will and pleasure. And since in every well-ordered society the liberty of the individual must be defined and limited by law in order to preserve equality of rights that may be claimed and enjoyed by all, this very necessity has aroused in many today a feeling of restlessness and dissatisfaction even under as just and free a government as that which maintains in our own country. This fact is evidenced by the waves of crime that are sweeping over our land, causing alarm and exciting terror in different communities. It appears in the amazing increase in the number of divorces which in some cities nearly equals the number of marriages. It is witnessed in many homes, some even of professedly Christian families, in which children have ceased to show any reverence for their parents and do not hesitate to speak of father or mother as "the old man" or "the old woman," or to address them in a tone of voice akin to contempt

or to fly into a rage at the mere suggestion that they are subject to parental authority. Thus today even children, possessed of such a spirit, resent any attempt to interfere with the liberty they claim, to do as they please. And evidently it does not please children who thus act to show the least gratitude for all the parental care and kindness they have received and upon which largely they may still be dependent.

The Spirit of Democracy in the Church

And this same spirit is manifesting itself today, and to an extent never before known, even in the Church and among the professed people of God. Upon His Church Christ has bestowed the power and authority to exercise discipline, not only upon those who may be guilty of scandalous sins, but also upon those who wilfully and persistently break their vows by neglecting to make a diligent use of the means of grace, or who defiantly conform, in so far as it pleases themselves, to the customs of a godless age and society. But discipline is practically unknown today in the Church. It is entirely unknown except possibly among a few of the older members who can recall that in their childhood the Church of Christ had some rules and regulations which her members not only promised, but were required to observe, or they would be brought before the courts of Christ's House, or "the bench of elders," as it was by some called, for censure and admonition.

Today however Church members talk as they like and do as they please without much respect for what the Church may teach in condemnation of their conduct and conversation. And so long as they do not transgress the civil laws and subject themselves to arrest as criminals they have no fear of being called upon to answer for their sins by any Church court. Nor is it likely that many of them would respond if they were summoned; and some would even laugh if they were suspended; for the spirit of Democracy has taken hold of them; they have become a law unto themselves, and refuse to recognize any higher law or authority to which they have any reason to sumbit. Hence like those of Sodom and Gomorrah if they do right in their own eyes they retain their self-respect, and they show but little concern for what others may think of them or of their conduct,

even though they forfeit the confidence and respect of their brethren in the Church.

Religious Conditions to Which Attention Is Called by the International S. S. Council.

If one is disposed to regard what is presented in this book regarding prevailing conditions in the Church today as the ravings of an extremist and pessimist, then read the following declaration recently sent out by the International S. S. Council of Religious Education. A copy of this declaration can be secured by sending a request for the same to the Secretary, No. 5 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill. This organization represents thirty-five of the larger denominations having a membership of over twenty millions all of whom are represented in the co-operative, international activities of the Council. The representatives of such an organization, speaking in the name of the Council, can surely be trusted to present judiciously and conservatively the FACTS to which they consider it necessary to call attention. And regarding religious conditions, not in lands of heathenism, but right here in Christian America, attention is called to what the statement declares is "THE APPALLING TRUTH." It is as follows:

> Twenty-seven million American persons, nominally Protestants, under twenty-five years of age, receive absolutely no formal or systematic religious instruction.
>
> Eight million children, under ten years of age, nominally Protestants, are growing up in non-church homes.
>
> Two out of every three Protestant children and youth, under twenty-five years of age, are not being touched in any way by the educational program of any Church.
>
> The Protestant churches provide only twenty-six hours annually of instruction in Sunday School. The average attendance is only one half the enrollment. The average therefore is but thirteen hours per child enrolled per year.
>
> The lack of a trained leadership is apparent. The Protestant Church schools are in charge of an army of untrained and unsupervised teachers and officers, with meager equipment and inadequate support. There is a marked decline in Religious education in the home.
>
> General education is vitally important, but without religion may produce the clever criminal—the adept

deceiver—the brilliant forger—the dangerous citizen. Roosevelt said: "People educated in intellect and not educated in morals and religion will become a menace to our nation."

The wholesome influence of a practical, livable, spiritual religion is necessary. Jesus Christ was the Master Teacher because He taught simple and basic principles —and lived what He taught.

The effective Church of today must supplement the ministry of preaching with the ministry of teaching.

Unless something is done to counteract the destructive influence tearing down the moral fibre of our future citizens, we will rear a generation unable to cope with the multiplying forces of evil.

IN THE NAME OF THE FUTURE OF AMERICA WE CALL UPON YOU TO AID!

Present conditions must be bettered. As a far-sighted business proposition, the safety of your home, the perpetuity of your cherished rights, the welfare of your loved ones is in grave danger.

DELINQUENCY
CRIME
IMMORALITY
DIVORCE
DISREGARD FOR LAW

Are they increasing in your community? Why are there so many Youthful Lawbreakers?

Such a statement is a revelation of the extent to which The Protestant Church has been neglecting her opportunity, even at her very door. The result is that religious education in Professedly Christian homes is markedly on the decline. And today there are few Church members who are sufficiently interested, even in the spiritual well-being and eternal destiny of their own children, to make any sufficient provision for the Christian education and training of the youth of the Protestant Church such as will afford them the only adequate protection from the forces of evil that are dragging them down to destruction and perdition. Such conditions prove that the Church is lukewarm, and she has lost her interest in her youth

only because she has lost her FAITH in the fundamental teachings of the Christian religion.

The Church to Contend for the Faith and Witness for the Truth.

Further, the Christian Church is declared to be the pillar and ground of the truth. She is exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). But times have changed, and the claim is made that the Church must keep up with the times. Today the thought of the many appears to be that a Church service should afford an attractive and pleasing entertainment, rather than an opportunity for the worship of God and for instruction in the Word of God.

The service also must be brief, exceedingly brief in some of the larger, more influential and wealthier congregations, because they depend for the money required to meet promptly their financial obligations on the contributions of certain rich pewholders who are not professing Christians, although probably they are very nice respectable people, and of certain others also who are professed Christians, although their intimate friends have no reason even to suspect that fact. But they also are rich and frequently large contributors provided the services are conducted in a manner pleasing to them. Such persons are willing to grace the Church occasionally with their presence, but they do not wish to be detained very long at a service in the house of God. Frequently, therefore, after making due allowance for the musical part of the entertainment, and for the announcement of socials and other amusements to be held during the week, but little time remains for the observance of even the forms of godliness. These social announcements are all printed in the Church bulletin for the information of the congregation, but nevertheless the pastor is required to announce the same with appropriate comments, and also to extend to all a hearty invitation to come for a good time and to enjoy themselves. After these essentials, which are required by the lovers of pleasures more than of God, there seldom remain more than fifteen or twenty minutes for the reading of a few verses of Scripture, the offering of a brief prayer in which

the pastor is expected to tell God about the great goodness of the congregation and its generous contributions for missions and other worthy objects, and also if the time will permit, for a five minute essay to be read by the pastor on "The Relative merits of Shakespearean plays as compared with the Modern drama," or some similar subject that will be more or less interesting, and that will have the special merit of not being likely to give any offense to those who have come to the service to be entertained.

Granted that such a farce, conducted in the name of religion, is not the general rule today, at least in the more evangelical churches, but no one who is at all acquainted with the facts can deny that there are churches, supposedly evangelical, in which services no more worth while are being conducted Sabbath after Sabbath, and in which no gospel messages that go beyond the doctrines of humanitarianism would be acceptable to or tolerated by those whose money and influence determine the character of every service permitted to be held in those congregations.

Foundation Truths Being Repudiated by Many Professors Today.

And what conclusion is to be drawn from the sad fact, known to all the world and deplored by every God-fearing man and woman, that today there are to be found many who by voice and pen are persisting in their attacks upon the very foundation truths of the Christian religion. These attacks come not from those without the Church who are open, avowed and honest infidels, but the attacks come from those who are within the Church, and of whom many are professedly Christian teachers, holding positions of commanding influence in schools of the prophets, in colleges, in great universities and in the pulpits of large strong congregations of professedly orthodox Christian people.

And in defiance of those who, in the name of Christianity and also of common honesty, protest against such teachings, and who would put an end to them at least within Christian controlled institutions, these same teachers of infidelity tauntingly reply, "If you refuse to tolerate us and our teachings you will

drive out of the Church a great multitude of the best, the most influential and the most devout Christians to be found today among your members." "A great multitude!" That is their own estimate of the number of those today within the Church as members who are poor and miserable and wretched and blind and naked; yet who think themselves rich and increased in good, having need of nothing.

Remember such conditions are present even today in the Church although the last period of Church History before the end of this dispensation of the grace of God has only a little more than begun. Following then the line suggested in the epistle itself, this Church of the Laodiceans might be described as, "The period of Democracy and the spread of the teachings of humanitarianism and of latitudinarianism, when many professing Christians manifest a spirit of independence of all rule and authority, of indifference even to the vital truth of religion and of self-righteous complacency; when the leaders also in the Church engage in the public defense of the claims of infidelity, when representative scholars of the Church do not hesitate to dishonor and to cast reproach upon Christ Whose deity they deny; and many determinedly resist and dishonor the Holy Spirit. From the revival of German rationalism, the abandonment of all Church discipline and the rise of infidelity within the Protestant Church under the cloak of "liberalism," and "modernism," to the Great Apostacy, A.D. 1880—to the end of the present Church Age.

Jesus Predicted Ungodliness and Anarchy to Follow His First Advent

While the forecast of this last period of the history of the Visible Church, for the greater part necessarily, is lacking the confirmation of historic proof, still it is in perfect agreement with what Jesus and His inspired apostles declared would be the prevailing conditions to be found within the Church "in the last days." To emphasize the fact that the universal prevalence of peace on earth, which has been promised during the Kingdom age, was not to be attained at His First Advent, Jesus declared:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:34-36).

Here as plainly as words can describe the fact Jesus made it known that the result of His First Advent would ultimately end in the severance of the most sacred ties, the repudiation of all authority and the breaking up of all order in the family which is the very foundation of organized society. This prediction of Christ can mean nothing less than the reign of ANARCHY.

Paul Warns of a Form of Godliness That Denies Its Power

The apostle Paul forewarns the Church as follows:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affections, truce, or covenant breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; From such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (2 Tim. 3:1-8).

"The time will come when they shall not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3, 4).

James Predicts That Laborers Will Be Defrauded by the Rich

And here is another prediction of an inspired apostle:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and

silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together *for the last days*. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the crys of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, or Jehovah of Hosts. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (Jas. 5:1-8).

Peter Warns of Infidel Scoffers Who Will Despise Government

In full accord with these predictions concerning the last days are the warnings given to the Church by the apostle Peter:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth that now are, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:3-7).

"But there were false prophets among the people (of old), even as there shall be false teachers among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you. . . . The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities . . . which have forsaken the

> right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness (the salary paid ministers as hirelings to prostitute their office). . . . While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. . . . If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Pet. 2: 1-21).

Jude Prophecies of the Coming Apostacy

So also the epistle of Jude was written to warn the Church of the coming apostacy. He says:

> "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude then recites certain historical incidents of previous apostacies, and the judgments that followed. He then adds, quoting the prophecy of Enoch:

> "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But beloved, remember ye the words that were spoken before of the prophets of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 4-7, 14-19).

Any one who can discover in such teachings of Scripture even the suggestion of a Church victorious over sin, dwelling together with a converted world, and enjoying the peace and

blessedness of the Millennium in the last days, or the end of the age before the return of Christ, has surely developed a faculty for the discernment of things that are entirely opposed to what God has revealed for our learning.

The Order of Final Events

And then once again the apostle Paul gives the order of the closing events of this age right down to the Day of Christ, which Day he very carefully distinguishes from the appearing of Christ for His saints, and our gathering together unto Him (2 Thes. 2:1-12; also 1 Thes. 4:13-18). According to the Note on this Scripture by Dr. Scofield, the order of events is "(1) The working of the mystery of lawlessness (Anarchy), under divine restraint, which had already begun in the apostles' time (v. 7); (2) The apostacy of the professing Church (v. 3; Lk. 18:8; 2 Tim. 3:1-8); (3) The removal of that which for the present restrains the mystery of lawlessness (vs. 6, 7). The restrainer is a person,—'he,' and since a mystery always implies a supernatural element, this Person can be no other than the Holy Spirit in the Church, to 'be taken out of the way' (v. 7; 1 Thes. 4:14-17). (Authorities who think that 'he that restraineth' refers to Nero, or some other earthly potentate, should read Matt. 12:24-28; E. M. M.). (4) The manifestation of the lawless one, the Antichrist (vs. 8-10; Dan. 7-8; 9:27; Matt. 24:15; Rev. 13:2-10); (5) The coming of Christ in glory and the destruction of the lawless one (v. 8; Rev. 19:11-21); (6) The Day of Jehovah, or of Christ (vs. 9-12; Isa. 2:12ff)."

The Blessed Hope

Here then are easily understood and most positive predictions regarding the character of the last days of this age, and of the several events to be expected as these are testified to by Jesus Christ and His inspired apostles. Their witness is in perfect agreement and corresponds in every detail with the conditions described in the epistle to the Church of the Laodiceans. Such testimony is authoritative and final for true Christians even though their understanding of these predictions may differ. And those who truly understand and believe the prophecies of

Scripture will not be taken unaware by the events that must shortly come to pass. Nor does the dark shadow of these approaching events cause those who believe in the certainty of these things to become pessimists, and to despair of any good. Their vision does not end in a fog-bank; they behold the evil day coming, but their faith also pierces through the dark and threatening clouds, and like the young man who served Elijah and whose eyes God had opened (2 Kings 6:-15-17), they have no fear, no doubts, no uncertainty regarding the outcome; but rather theirs is the blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13).

To Believe the Prophets Is to Know the Future

Those who believe the prophets know that the prevalent spirit of lawlessness will continue and even increase as this present evil age draws nearer to its close. They know that the lamentable conditions already manifest within the Visible Church of Christ are but the preparatory steps that will lead to and end in the great apostacy, or the falling away of professed believers from the faith once delivered unto the saints, and consequently in the complete withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from such a fellowship. They know that immediately thereafter there will appear the Lawless one, or the Antichrist, who will be the incarnation of Satan himself, even as the Man Christ Jesus is the incarnation of deity. They know that then the wicked and ungodly will celebrate the victory of the Devil, and that most awful conditions, such as are beyond the power of words to describe, will for a time transform this earth into a veritable hell. All of these things are according to the prophecy of Scripture, and to believe the prophets is to know the things which shall be hereafter. But thanks be unto God "the triumphing of the wicked is short" (Job 20:5),—at most a few brief years. Then Jehovah Jesus will bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God (Isa. 52:10).

> "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they

shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thes. 5:2-4).

Chapter XIII

THE VISION IN HEAVEN

Christ's Authority Is Over All Things

It is unfortunate, to say the least, that so many sincere Christians and teachers of the Word of God have so imperfect an understanding of the truth revealed in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ for our learning.

This is the only book of the Bible that supplies the believer with an inspired pen portraiture of the Glorified Son of Man as He appears today in the heavenlies (Rev. 1:12-18), at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3), henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool (Heb. 10:13).

The four gospels reveal Jesus as the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, despised and rejected of men. The several epistles relate the great blessings left as a legacy to the Church and also to the world by the same Jesus Who was crucified for our sins, Who rose for our justification and Who ascended to heaven that He might send the Holy Spirit with blessings to all who would receive them as coming from Him. And both the gospels and the epistles promise the return of Christ in glory to reign in His Kingdom on the earth. But it is only in this book that we have the Revelation, or the unveiling, of the Glorified Son of Man, Jesus Christ, in His present relation to time, and to all things now on the earth as the One Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come (Rev. 1:4). To Jesus all authority has been given and is now possessed by Him (Matt. 28:18). He was in the beginning with God, and all things were made by Him (John 1:2, 3); and He is to come again and restore all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:20, 21).

This book makes it known what Jesus is doing while His

friends are working and waiting for Him to return with blessings and rewards for them. It reveals Him in His present relation to all things in the heavens and on the earth: in His relation to the churches, to true and false professors, to the Gentile nations, to the seed of Abraham, to coming judgments that will desolate this earth (Ps. 46), and that are to be sent forth unto victory, to the great and dreadful day of the Lord when He will triumph over every enemy and crush before Him every foe, to the Kingdom which He will establish on this earth and to the new things that will follow the Kingdom Age.

In this book we behold Jesus in His threefold offices as the Prophet-Judge, the Great High Priest, and the Glorious and Almighty Sovereign Who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Here He appears also as the gracious Saviour, the just Master and Employer, the loving Friend, and the adorable Bridegroom, the One altogether lovely and the chiefest among ten thousand.

Christ Is the Center of Every Vision Had by the Seer

In every vision granted the Seer, as recorded in this book, Jesus must be seen and recognized, either in His own Person, or in His representative acting in His name and by His authority, as the Most High God Who is in the midst of the throne in heaven, and in the midst also of the churches, and as the One Who ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will.

And since this book is such a complete revelation, or unveiling of Jesus Christ as He is today, and as He appears governing and directing the affairs of men for the accomplishing of His just and righteous purposes, it should be easy to understand why it is the one book, above all others, concerning which it is declared:

> "Blessed is he that readeth (referring to the public reader), and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

But to keep in mind and to do the things that are written in this book it is essential that they shall be understood. And

Jesus evidently intended that they should be understood when He commissioned His beloved disciple, "To write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter, and send it unto the seven churches,"—the seven including the One Visible Church of Christ in her dispensational fulness or completion.

It is proposed now, therefore, to offer a brief explanation of the principal events which in the days of the Seer were the things which shall be hereafter, and which for the greater part await the future even to this day for their complete fulfilment.

> "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit" (Rev. 4:1, 2).

"After this," refers of course to the messages received that were to be sent to the seven churches. Having completed that work, which forecast the general history of the Church from the beginning of her work to the end of the dispensation of the grace of God, the Seer is now to receive visions of other, and of entirely different things that have their own time for beginning and ending.

It is a mistake therefore to conclude, as many do, that beginning with the fourth chapter, all the events mentioned are to be fulfilled only after the predictions concerning the Church have had their fulfilment. This will be made clear by later explanations. The above words, therefore, "after this," signify nothing more than that the Seer, who had received the messages that were to be sent to the churches while he abode on Patmos, is now called to come up to heaven for further visions of things which must be hereafter. He obeyed the divine call and immediately in spirit only, and not in body, the Seer passed through the opened door and was in heaven. There he saw and described, not only things in heaven, but also what he beheld, from that vantage ground, of the events that transpired on the earth and in the world of Gentile nations.

The Throne Set in Heaven

> "And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold" (Rev. 4:2-4).

The throne which John beheld in heaven was occupied by the Godhead, and all that he further describes merely adds important details to the vision that was granted to the prophet Daniel (7:13, 14) regarding the same scene and events that are here recorded in the Book of the Revelation. Seated about this throne were four and twenty elders, the number twelve and its multiples signify the completed and perfected work of God; and the elders were those saints who, after Christ's resurrection, came out of their graves and appeared unto many in the holy city, and who evidently were received into heaven after Christ's ascension (Matt. 27:52, 53). They are elders, therefore, as regards the time of their resurrection and reward. Their white raiment symbolizes the righteousness of the saints, and their crowns were those of victors (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

> "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature was like a calf, and the third living creature has a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:5-8).

It was a judgment throne that John beheld for out of it proceeded lightnings, thunderings and voices. The seven lamps

or Spirits before the throne are symbolic of the dispensational fulness of the One Holy Spirit. The living creatures in the midst and round about the throne were full of eyes indicative of a marvelous power of discernment and understanding; their wings are suggestive of sustained and swift movement. And there are two things that make it practically certain that what the Seer then beheld and described was in preparation for the judgment of the Gentile world of which the character and conduct, from the beginning to the end of this present evil age, are predicted, just as in the epistles there is a forecast of the entire history of the Visible Church. (1) There is a rainbow about the throne which at once recalls God's Covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:9-17), of which the bow in the cloud was to be the token. That Covenant was made with Noah, and his sons, and also with every living creature of all flesh that was upon the earth. That Covenant also was established for "perpetual generations," and served as a guarantee to all flesh that they should not again be cut off from the earth by the waters of a flood. The rainbow also was the token of the Covenant between God and the earth (v. 13).

Then (2) The four living creatures about that throne were evidently representatives of all flesh dwelling on the earth. The first was like a lion, the king of wild beasts; the second was like a calf, a representative of domestic animals; the third had the face as a man, and so represented the rational creation; and the fourth was like a flying eagle, the king of the fowls of the air. Now since God had prepared His throne for judgment (Ps. 9:3-9), these representatives of creation are present to bear witness to the fact that justice and judgment are the habitation of that throne.

The Living Creatures Are Glorified Men

It is further evident that the four living creatures, who in relation to the judgment throne occupy a position of unusual honor, exaltation and dignity, are themselves redeemed men rather than cherubim or seraphim as some have supposed them to be. They do not answer the description of either of these angelic orders of beings and they unite with the elders in the "new song" of the redeemed (Rev. 5:1-10). Who they are

among the worthies of faith has not been revealed, and it would serve no good purpose to try to guess their identity although there are Scriptures that seem to support the suggestion that the living creatures are Enoch, Elijah, Moses and Paul the great apostle. It is enough to know that these living creatures are today leaders in the worship of God in heaven, and they are joined by the elders who cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

The Sea of Glass

For the house of the Lord in Jerusalem Solomon provided a molten sea . . . the brim was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; it contained ten thousand baths (1 Kings 7:23, 26). That molten sea with its baths was for the use of those who would worship in the temple, and the required washings of the worshipers signified their cleansing from sin's defilement; for God must be worshiped in the beauty of holiness (Ps. 96:9). The sea of glass clear as crystal before the throne in heaven suggests the same truth, namely, that only the pure in heart shall see God. But the sea before the throne contains no baths, for all other than the holy angels, who are permitted to appear before the thrice holy God to worship Him, have already been washed in the blood of the Lamb and made whiter than snow. Sin cannot enter heaven, and so there the sea has not been defiled: it appears clear as crystal.

Chapter XIV

THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS

The Title Deed to the Earth

> "And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth (the dead who await resurrection), was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon" (Rev. 5:1-4).

The little book in the hand of the Creator was THE TITLE DEED TO THE EARTH. This fact is shown by the rainbow throne which reminds of the Covenant between God and the earth; also by the "new song" sung by the four living creatures and by the elders after Christ had taken the book out of the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne (vs. 8-10).

We shall meet this same little book again in the hand of the mighty angel Who comes down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow upon His head. He has in His hand the little book open instead of sealed, and this angel Who is Christ Himself takes formal possession at that time both of the earth and of the sea (Rev. 10:1, 2; Josh. 1:3). And the final result of the taking of that book, and of the opening of its seals by Christ is declared, when the great voices in heaven proclaim:

> "The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Anointed One (the true Church, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife), and He shall reign for THE AGE of the ages" (Rev. 11:15).

The Seven Seals

The book that John saw was sealed with seven seals which signifies that the right to take possession of the inheritance was

for some reason delayed. Such was the case when Hanameel desired the prophet Jeremiah to buy his field that was in Anathoth, and at that time in the possession of Nebuchadnezzar and his army that had laid siege to Jerusalem. The prophet, believing the word of the Lord that predicted the restoration of the land to Judah, bought the offered field for a price, and had the evidence of the purchase duly subscribed and sealed according to the law and custom. Then in the presence of the witnesses that had attested the deed of purchase, the prophet delivered the sealed book unto Baruch whom he charged to put the evidences of the purchase in an earthen vessel "that they may continue for many days"; and the prophet added: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (Jer. 32:6-15).

Christ the Proprietor; But Satan the Possessor Today of the Earth

By right of creation "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," as the Bible declares. He also purposed that the righteous should inherit the earth and enjoy its possession. But it is further revealed how Satan usurped the dominion, and how ever since the fall of the race he has held the possession and refused the Lawful Proprietor His just rights in the earth. The Devil also claims the right of a proprietor to give the honor, glory and riches of the earth to whomsoever he would. Even Jesus recognized the fact that for the present Satan, by the free will and choice of men, was the accepted prince of the habitable world (John 14:30), and that he was therefore the god of the age whom blinded nations served. But Jesus also declared, "NOW is the judgment of this world; NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). And "in the spirit" the Seer is transported to heaven and is carried away from time into the future when the usurper is finally cast out, and when the rightful Proprietor comes into possession of His inheritance.

And as the prophet Daniel makes it known it was when the Son of Man ascended to the court of heaven in a cloud that at once He approached the Ancient of days to claim and to receive

His inheritance from Him. It is the same court scene that here appears to John in the vision, and he furnishes the details that are not to be found in Daniel's prophecy, or anywhere but in this Book of the Revelation. John sees therefore the title deed to the earth in the hand of the Creator; it has long been sealed, and the question is asked: "Who is worthy, or entitled, to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?"

> "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne" (Rev. 5:5-7).

It is a sad but true fact that not even the best men of our race that ever lived on this earth are able of themselves to regain the inheritance that has been forfeited because of sin. No wonder that John wept much, for not even the beloved disciple himself was worthy to accomplish that result. However, as one of the elders informed the Seer, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, had succeeded, and John recognized Him Who was worthy to claim the inheritance as the Lamb that had been slain, having now seven horns, significant of complete earthly power and authority, and seven eyes, or the seven Spirits of God, symbolic of the dispensational fulness of the Holy Spirit in his omniscience and ability to discern and to reveal even the very secrets of the hearts of men,—Jesus possessed all, and lo, He was in the midst of the throne, and in the midst of those about the throne, the central Personage of all. He came and took the book, the title deed to the earth, out of the hand of Him Who sat upon the throne.

Not only as the Creator but as the Redeemer and as the Only Begotten Son, the title to this earth is vested in our Lord Jesus Christ; its possession also is assured Him by the Covenant promise of the Father (Ps. 2:7-12), and in this vision Jesus

is seen prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to take possession of His purchased inheritance (Eph. 1:14).

Universal Worship and Adoration

> "And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden bowls full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:8-10).

Here the four living creatures join with the elders in the new song, and both alike acknowledge redemption by the blood of the Lamb Who also had made them kings and priests unto God. And anticipating the results they declare: "WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH" (v. 10). The angels also about the throne exalt the Lamb, saying:

> "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (v. 12).

And, since the hour drew near that was awaited by the whole creation, that under the curse of sin had been groaning and travailing in pain together (Rom. 8:18-25), the Seer declares:

> "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that liveth for ever and ever" (ch. 5:13, 14).

Such then were the scenes and events in heaven as they appeared to the Seer in the vision.

Chapter XV

THE FOUR HORSES AND THEIR RIDERS

The Opening of the Seals

But as the Lamb proceeded to open the seals and thus to present before the throne the evidence contained in the book to establish the fact that

> "The earth and the fulness with which it is stored,
> The world and its dwellers belong to the Lord,"

the attention of the Seer is directed to a very different scene that is being enacted on the earth:

> "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four living creatures saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer" (ch. 6:1, 2).

The Horses Signify Human Systems; the Riders Are Satanic Agents

In contrast with all that John saw in heaven this scene is entirely natural and earthly. And in the imagery of Scripture the horse symbolizes material and earthly systems or organizations or agencies, rather than such as are spiritual and heavenly. A white horse is significant also of an organization being employed for the accomplishment of purposes that are right, just, pure and peaceful. Many earnest students of prophecy, therefore, consider the white horse and its rider as the representative of the true and faithful gospel messenger going forth to win the victories of peace. However, the rider on this horse is armed with the bow of a warrior, the material weapon of

earthly and carnal potentates. To him also is given the victor's crown. Both of these things suggest conflict and conquest, agreeable to the announcement: "He went forth conquering and to conquer," if necessary by strife and combat.

Gospel Messengers Not Armed With Bows

Gospel messengers are indeed warriors; their armor is described (Eph. 6:11-17), and their weapon is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. It is the same sharp two-edged sword that went out of the mouth of the Glorified Son of Man as He appeared to John in the vision. Christ has neither commanded nor does He permit His soldiers to use any other weapon when on the mission for which He sends them forth. The rider on the white horse does not tally with any description of a gospel messenger to be found in the Bible. He is armed with a bow and he has no need for the sandals of peace on his feet for he travels on horseback. Further, as gospel messengers are sent forth as sheep among wolves (Matt. 10:16), it might be expected that the more valiant of them would win for themselves a martyr's crown, rather than that they should go forth conquering and to conquer, wearing a victor's crown (stephanos),—the crown that is laid up for the righteous (2 Tim. 4:8), and that will be neither possessed nor worn until after the good fight of faith is finished.

Religious Deceivers and Fakirs

This rider then is the symbol of the false Christs, the false prophets, the religious fakirs of whom many hypocritically lay claim to the name Christian; and that he appears mounted on a white horse is what might be expected and should deceive no one. Paul warns the Church against false apostles and deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and he declares, "It is no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Matt. 24:4-8). Whenever Satan can hope to gain his end by hypocrisy, fraud and deceit, he will never fail to use

that method, but will run true to form. The rider on the white horse then is the Devil's agent going forth in opposition to the gospel of the Son of God to fill the earth with false religions such as Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Mormonism, Christian Science, Russelism and kindred religious systems that enable Jews and Gentiles, infidels and even professed Christians to worship at the same altar, and that have been so abundant and so wonderfully successful in every period of the world's history.

War, Famine, Pestilence, Murder, and Anarchy

> "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword" (ch. 6:3, 4).

This red horse is symbolic of war which is another agency of the Devil. It arises from hatred, envy, jealousy, selfishness, wrong ambitions and the love of money which is the root of all evil. Few expositors have mistaken the figure here which is generally understood to signify war with all that follow in its train,—bloodshed, famine, pestilence, murder and anarchy, these are the things that are represented in the red horse and its rider who had power to take peace from the earth and to kill with the sword.

Commercial Greed and Oppression of the Poor

> "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (ch. 6:5, 6).

The black horse is commonly understood to be symbolic of famine, and many eloquent sermons have been preached with these verses as the text. But in famine, *per se*, there is no evil. It may result from war or from the waste of one's substance

or from idleness or from natural causes such as drought, frost, excessive heat, etc., but while it may be and often is a consequent of evil yet it is not evil in itself.

However, without exception, the horses in this vision and the riders are all satanic agents. They represent positive wickedness of various kinds. The white horse stands for what is right, just, pure and peaceful, and is used in this connection simply to make more emphatic the hypocrisy and deceit of Satan. The black horse stands for the very opposite of what the white horse signifies. It represents wrong, injustice, corruption and oppression. Its rider has in his hand a pair of balances, the symbol of trade, of business, of commerce; and the kind of business being transacted in this scene is that which wrongs and oppresses the poor, while it deals also dishonestly and corruptly with the rich even though it caters to their desires, and fawningly gratifies their wishes for the sake of their trade and the money that is in it for the seller (Hos. 12:7; Prov. 14:31).

Crooked Business, and Deceitful Methods

In one of the ten visions of the prophet Zechariah, the number ten representing the imperfect and generally the wicked works of men, there was seen the ephah, the measure of commerce, with a woman sitting in it. It was sealed also with a lead weight, another symbol of trade, and was carried with wings like a stork between heaven and earth. The prophet was informed, "This is WICKEDNESS" (Zech. 5:8).

There is business that is worthy a Christian man; it is honest and honorable; and one can be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. But that is not the kind of business conducted by the rider on the black horse. The use he made of the balances in his hand caused a voice in the midst of the four living creatures indignantly to exclaim:

> "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

At that time a penny, the Roman denarius worth 20c, was the equivalent of a full day's wages for the ordinary laborer (Matt.

20: 1-14). A measure of wheat, or three measures of barley, the latter a grain of inferior food value, was the daily consumption needed for each person. Here then is the laborer being defrauded, and the poor among them, especially those with families, being greatly oppressed. What if they do receive the normal wage when the price of the necessaries of life is inflated until it requires a full day's pay to provide for a single day's requirements for one person!

Fawning Avarice Favoring the Rich

On the other hand oil and wine were luxuries in which only the rich could indulge. They were also articles of merchandise used as mediums of exchange with which taxes and other obligations could be paid, and in which capitalists could invest their wealth. Hence these articles of commerce must be kept on hand to gratify the tastes and minister to the whims of those who could afford luxuries for themselves, and they were not to be hurt; for while it was all right according to the ethics of such business to wrong and oppress the laborer, it would never do to harm the investments or to lessen the wealth of capitalists. The black horse and his rider, therefore, represent crooked business such as will not stand the light of investigation, and when weighed in the balances it will be found wanting in every element of truth, justice, righteousness and equity; for this business is wickedness.

Irreligion, Immorality and Evil Companions

> "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death (spiritual), and with the beasts of the earth" (ch. 6:7, 8).

"As righteousness tendeth to life," said the wise man, "so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death" (Prov. 11: 19). And there are three evils mentioned in Scripture that tend to shorten life and that tend to bring one quickly down to

sheol or hades: (1) Covetousness which is idolatry (Num. 16:29-33; Prov. 1:11-19); (2) Immorality (Prov. 7:5-27); and (3) the choice of godless and immoral companions (Prov. 9:13-18; 23:2-35). By these evils, Death the rider on the pale horse with Hades following him has power over the fourth part of the earth, the fourth part signifying a portion in every quarter of the earth, to kill, impoverish, enslave the soul, and to cause men and women, as outcasts of society, to perish with the beasts of the earth.

The World Under Satan's Control

The opening of these four seals include the entire world period from the ascension of Christ to the end of the times of the Gentiles. During all of this time Satan, as the prince of the powers of the air, works in the children of disobedience, and thus is able to accomplish his will on earth, even as in the days of Job, to the full limit of divine permission (Job 1:8-12; 2:1-6). This period, therefore, is of peculiar interest to the four living creatures in heaven who watch over the affairs of earth, and of all flesh dwelling therein that are parties to the Rainbow Covenant. Hence it is the living creatures that in each case call the Seer's attention to the work that Satan has been carrying out on the earth, especially since the days of Christ's ascension, and in which he is still engaged. The white horse together with the red, black and pale horses, four in all which is the earth number, represent agencies employed and directed by Satan the usurper; and whatever is accomplished by these agencies must be understood to be his response here on the earth to the scene being enacted before the judgment throne in heaven.

Satanic Opposition to the Reign of the Christ

Since it is Christ's desire, plan and method to win the world by the truth and by pure religion Satan opposes with lies and with false religions; since Christ would bestow peace on the earth and teach men to love one another, Satan stirs up wars and sets his followers to killing one another; since Christ would establish righteousness, kindliness and justice among men in

their dealings one with another, the Devil promotes wickedness, oppression and injustice; since Christ would give life and desires that men should have the more abundant life, Satan sends forth Death and Hades, over which for the present he has the power, and directs them to kill with sword, with hunger, with spiritual death and with the beasts of the earth.

Such then is the response of the Devil to the purpose of the ascended Lord to take possession of the earth, and to rule over it with justice and with equity. And Satan has been making use of all these agencies in each century of this present evil age even as Jesus predicted he would, and Jesus adds this further significant information, The end is not yet; "All these things are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:4-8).

Not Events, But Characteristics of the Age Are Described

These horses, therefore, represent no one particular event of the kind as occurring at some certain date either past, present or future, in the history of the world. Rather they indicate the characteristics of the entire present age, and these characteristics may be expected to become even worse as the end approaches.

Just before the close of this world age wickedness will reach its culmination under the reign of the Antichrist, in whom the Devil will become incarnate even as the Godhead became incarnate in the Man Christ Jesus. At that time the rider on the white horse will be the Antichrist himself as the head of the whole iniquitous system of idolatrous worship; then also Antichrist, as the rider on the red horse of war, will lead his followers to Armageddon, the battlefield of the satanic armies that take peace from the earth, and glory in that they should kill one another; then the rider, also, on the black horse of wrong, injustice, oppression and commercial greed will be the representative of that great city of trade and merchandise, Babylon, the Capital of the Antichrist, which will have become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird,—a city in connection with which the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies; and then also the rider, Death, on the pale horse with Hades following him, will be recognized in

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication,—even that woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and to behold her will be a cause of wonder to the righteous; for her house is the way to sheol, or hades, going down to the chambers of death.

Chapter XVI

THE LATTER DAYS

Divine Intervention

Thus in the last end of this present evil age satanic misrule and wickedness will have reached their climax, and then there will be divine intervention to put an end to the whole system of abominations. This divine intervention will occur in connection with the opening of the last three seals. This event will take place during the last seven years of this age, and the time of the beginning will be indicated by the outpouring of divine judgments. And (1) there will be judgments tempered with mercy, and when these are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Then (2) there will be just judgments without mercy, the great tribulation that will continue probably for three and a half years and end with the Day of the Lord and the utter destruction of all impenitent sinners whom neither love nor judgments have reclaimed from their evil ways. Immediately following these judgments there will be the return of Jesus Christ to reign in Person on the earth over the nations and to rule them with justice and with equity.

The Present Evil Age Ends With Daniel's Seventieth (Year) Week

There is mention in Scripture of the dispensation of the grace of God, or the Church age; also of the times of the Gentiles, or the world age which to the very end will continue to be characterized by false religions, wars, the oppression of the poor, and the reign of death as taught under the first four seals. Neither the Church nor the world age has as yet ended, and so God's people Israel are still cast away. They are not given any

consideration whatever in this prophecy under the opening of the first four seals. However, at the end of the period described as the dispensation of the grace of God, or at the end of the Church age, wickedness will have reached its full consummation both in the Church and in the world. The Holy Spirit will then be withdrawn; the True Church will hear the last gospel trump and be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; the remaining Visible Church will then wholly apostatize, and the world will have formally accepted the Antichrist as its king and its god. Even the nation of Israel, which in its blindness and unbelief will have at that time returned to Palestine, will be in league with Antichrist from whom it will secure national recognition, and the permission to worship the God of its fathers according to all the requirements of the law of Moses.

After the close of the Church age, or the dispensation of the grace of God, and for all the remaining period of the times of the Gentiles, in all seven years, or Daniel's Seventieth Week, there will be the period mentioned by the prophets of Israel as "the latter days," or "the time of the end." The opening of the fifth seal marks the beginning of "the latter days"' when God will again deal with His Covenant people Israel under the trumpet judgments, and as a result that people will once again be grafted into their own olive tree (Rom. 11:13-36). During the same time God will settle His controversy with the Gentile nations, or apostate Christendom, under the bowl judgments with the final results that Gentile world power will be crushed and broken, and these nations will be compelled to bow the knee to Jesus Christ, and to acknowledge and submit to Him as their Lord.

Satan's Resources at an End

With the opening of the fifth seal Satan's resources, the riders on the four horses, that are now being used in opposition to this earth being taken possession of by Christ, will be at an end. They will every one of them be employed to the full limit of power that is permitted unto Satan. As in the days when Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses for the purpose of deceiving the Egyptians so that they would not suspect the

real cause of their trouble and seek the true remedy, and further to encourage Pharaoh in his mad resistance to the will of God (Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18, 19), so, for the purpose of deceiving the nations, Satan is today employing all his resources in opposition to God's will. But, however successfully these agencies may be used for the allotted time here on the earth, they are doomed to fail, and not for one moment will they prevent the carrying out of God's will in the fulness of time agreeable to His plans and purpose.

> "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah and His Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."
>
> "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure" (Ps. 2:2-5).

In heaven the work of opening the seals of the book, the title deed to the earth, will continue without any regard to satanic opposition here on the earth. But with the opening of the remaining three seals, three being the number of the Trinity and of divine work, it is God's voice and divine agencies, and not human agencies controlled by Satan, that arrest the attention of the Seer who records for our learning what next appeared to him in the vision.

At the Cry of Martyred Saints God Ariseth, Ps. 12th

> "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (ch. 6:9-11).

These martyrs are evidently the victims of Satan's malice during the whole period included in the opening of the first

four seals. They have not yet shared resurrection joy and blessedness, but are still "souls under the altar." And even as the blood of Abel, whom Cain slew, cried unto Jehovah from the ground (Gen. 4:10), so now the blood of these martyrs cried to God to avenge their wrongs. At that time, for reasons already given, there will be none but Jehovah to Whom the oppressed could appeal, and He will not fail those who trust in Him. Rather He has declared:

> "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith Jehovah; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him" (Ps. 12).

And significantly the psalmist adds: "The words of Jehovah are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." God's words were trusted and tried by these martyrs even in the furnace of earth. Now the time has come, with the opening of the fifth seal, for God to arise and avenge them. Hence, to these souls under the altar, the white robes, significant of the righteousness of the saints, is awarded, and it is promised that in a little season, their fellowservants and brethren will likewise win their crowns as martyrs, and then will follow the time of reward.

In the face of this as yet unfulfilled prophecy of God's word let none of His children be so foolish as to imagine that the days of the martyrs have passed and gone for ever. Under the reign of the Antichrist, as it has been revealed, there are multitudes who shall yet be slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they hold.

The Martyrs of the Jewish Nation

Among Christian expositors it is generally understood that those slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held are the martyrs of Jesus. But the Scriptures do not so declare, and care should be taken not to add to what is found written in this prophecy. The fact that the souls of these martyrs are seen under the altar which is as distinctively a Jewish institution as the Cross of Calvary is a Christian institution; and the further fact that no mention is here made of the Lamb of God, nor is it said of these martyrs, as of those who

came out of the great tribulation, that they had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,—such facts point to the conclusion that these are Jewish rather than Christian martyrs.

It must not be overlooked that while the Church will be judged under the New Covenant in Christ's blood, and while the world will be judged under the Rainbow Covenant, on the other hand the natural seed of Abraham will be judged under its own Covenant. Further, it is revealed that God still greatly loves Israel (Jer. 31:20, 21), and while concerning the gospel they are enemies for the sake of the Gentile Church, yet as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sake (Rom. 11:28). "Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"; but even in their blindness as regards the truth of the gospel, multitudes of that people, in every century of this present age, have been true to the faith of their fathers; they have obeyed the law of Moses as far as it was within their power so to do, and they have laid down their lives rather than to abandon their testimony or to depart from the Word of God (Old Testament) to Whom they looked and in Whom they trusted for deliverance. Such then are the martyrs under the altar who were slain for the Word of God and for the testimony which they held. Although this was not the testimony of Jesus accepted by them as their Messiah nevertheless it was the testimony of their Messiah Whom they have not recognized in Jesus.

Under This Seal Judgments Are Not Mentioned

And connected with the opening of this fifth seal, five being the number of human incompleteness and insufficiency, there is no mention of the judgments that will be visited upon that nation and which will begin at the very time this seal is opened. God's purpose in sending these judgments on Israel is not so much of the nature of punishment, such as is visited upon criminals, as it is of chastisement, such as is visited upon a child, and as a result this nation will be brought to repentance.

In contrast also with the judgments that will be poured out upon the world, every one of those sent upon Israel will be tempered with mercy as is very evident to those who study the

trumpet-judgments. Further, under the reign and cruel despotism of the Antichrist, multitudes more of the natural seed of Abraham will be slain for their faith in Jehovah their God; hence the martyrs already under the altar of the Jewish religion, who during all the past centuries have been slaughtered by the people of different nations, and killed chiefly for the crime of being Jews, are required to wait yet for a little season, seven years at most, until their fellowservants, the Israelites, and their brethren, the Jews, should be killed also even as they were for the Word of God and for the testimony which they hold.

Earth-Inhabiters Terrified by Divine Judgments

> "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (ch. 6: 12-17).

That such a terrible catastrophic judgment will be appalling all will admit without need to argue. It is a scene, however, with which Bible readers generally are familiar. Jesus Himself forewarned His hearers concerning this very time connected with the opening of these seals in His Olivet discourse (Matt. 24: 15-31), and He furnished details of several events which are plainly to be inferred, although they are not specifically mentioned by His servant John in what he records in this portion of the Revelation. How great the terror that will then take possession of earth's inhabitants from the kings on their thrones to the very lowest of their subjects is revealed. They

will seek to hide themselves and even pray in their fright to inanimate objects to fall on them and hide them in that great day of the wrath of the Lamb with which this evil age will end.

Among all accusers there is none more unrelenting than a GUILTY CONSCIENCE whose voice of warning (Rom. 2:15), has been despised and neglected by the wicked in the day of their prosperity until it has become seared (1 Tim. 4:2). However, in their day of calamity they will listen to what that same conscience has to say, and there will be no need then of other witnesses to convince them of their guilt that calls for deserved punishment. Thus physical death would be welcome indeed if only it would hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Chapter XVII

GOD'S SERVANTS AND THE PALM-BEARERS

The Four Angels Holding the Four Winds

The vision included in the sixth seal comes down to the very moment when the Day of the Lord is about to complete the terrific judgments that for seven years will have kept the inhabitants of the earth in terror. Speaking of this time Jesus said:

> "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Lk. 21:25, 26).

Following this sixth vision, the Seer continues:

> "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow upon the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree" (ch. 7:1).

Everywhere in Scripture the winds are revealed as divine agents and used either for blessings or for judgments (Ex. 14:21; 15:10; Num. 11:31; Isa. 27:8). Here, the four winds are significant of judgments which for the time, the four angels are holding back to permit of the Seer having a vision of something quite different. Four is the earth number, and the four winds indicate the complete and final judgments of wrath that will be visited on the earth when the seventh seal is opened to be followed immediately by the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the seventh bowl of the wrath of God which judgments introduce The Great Day

of the Lord. That Day will bring to an end the great tribulation:

> "It shall be one day (only one) which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. . . . And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. 14:7-9).

Evil Overruled for Good

The purpose of holding back the revelation of the judgments of that last day of wrath is to permit a vision of consolation in which it is revealed to the Seer that while God is not in the judgments (1 Kings 19:11), yet He nevertheless sends, controls and overrules them. Thus "He makes all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). It is thus, also, that God brings good out of evil; that He makes the very wrath of men to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He restrains (Ps. 76:10). The judgments which these four angels are holding back are shown in connection with the sounding of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven bowls of the wrath of God.

The Servants of God to be Sealed

> "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (ch. 7:2-4).

From verses 5-8 it is shown that these servants of God are selected from each of the twelve tribes of Israel with the exception of Dan for which tribe there is substituted the tribe of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. Thus the full number of twelve tribes is complete as follows: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph,

and Benjamin. The omission of the tribe of Dan has proved a great puzzle to expositors some of whom would solve the difficulty after the method of destructive critics who assume that whatever they are unable to explain is an interpolation, "a fragment of Jewish apocalypse incorporated by some Christian writer." After this fashion some would get rid of Rev. 7:1-8. Others offer explanations that are nothing more than guesswork and no attempt is made either to support or to justify them by an appeal to Scripture. The following Scriptural explanation of the difficulty is therefore submitted:

Jacob's Dying Blessing Concerning Dan

The patriarch Jacob when on his death bed gathered his sons together about him to make known to each one of them that which should befall him *"In the last days."* And upon Dan Jacob pronounced a blessing which to explain has also taxed the ingenuity of guesswork expositors. "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel," said Jacob. This predicted for Dan "in the last days" a most unusual position and honor. It was nothing less than the reward which in the days of His earthly ministry Jesus offered to His Jewish hearers when He declared: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration (paligenesia, "re-creation," or "making new") when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, *judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Matt. 19:28). Such is therefore the promised reward of Christ's followers, and that is exactly what Jacob predicted for Dan. Further, it was said of Dan: "He shall be a serpent by the way." It was a serpent that Moses was commanded to lift up in the wilderness, and to look upon it meant life to every one that was bitten (Num. 21:8, 9). And "by the way," in the journey toward the last days, Dan was to be a serpent, a witness to Christ and to His saving power like the one Moses lifted up, and in the same manner that the Son of Man must be lifted up (John 3:14). Again, Dan was to be "an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." The figure suggests that the tribe of Dan by becoming Christian was in a position to attack suc-

cessfully the Jewish ceremonial ritual, symbolized as the horse or human agency on which Israel thought to ride to spiritual victory, and to unhorse the rider by winning these their brethren to Christ. Hence Jacob's blessing of Dan closes with these significant words: "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah" (Gen. 49:16-18).

Writers who have attempted to trace the lost ten tribes of Israel have met with but little success. Yet they seem to agree that the Danish people, of uncertain origin, inhabitants of Denmark, are the descendants of Dan. It is claimed that in their wandering in search of a home that this tribe, after being freed from captivity, traveled across Europe, naming different places and rivers, the Danube for example, according to their custom, after their father (Josh. 19:47), and that being naturally a maritime people (Judges 5:17), this tribe found the country of Denmark suited to their desires and settled there. That nation, the Danes, is today Protestant Lutherans, and one of the great mercantile marine people.

However, that the Danes were originally Danites has not been proved conclusively and may never be. But altogether aside from this interesting bit of speculation regarding that tribe, the truth of Scripture remains which predicts for the Danites the position, honor and reward of Christians. That people, therefore, would no longer be numbered with the tribes of Israel, and so Manasseh, the son of Joseph, takes their place in the list. And possibly for a like reason the tribe of Levi, which was not to be numbered among the tribes of Israel (Num. 1:49, 50; 3:11-13), but which proved unfaithful to its high calling, is included in the list, while Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph, to whom Jacob gave the first born's blessing, guiding his hands wittingly so that his arms formed the Cross when he blessed the lads (Gen. 46:13, 14, 17-19), is not to be found in that list. Whether accepted or rejected this explanation has the merit at least of being suggested by the Scriptures.

The Sealing of the Servants of God

The sealing or marking of Christians today is not so much for the purpose of identification as it is for protection. It is

the work of the Holy Spirit by Whom all true believers in Christ are sealed unto the day of redemption. What may be the exact nature of this work is not known, although it very probably includes the indwelling of the Spirit in those who are sealed (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

In that day, however, the sealing, whatever be its nature, is "in the forehead," where it may be seen by all. That means that at that time the servants of God will receive some outward mark, probably "the anointing oil" required by the Mosaic ritual that will identify the sealed ones to all who behold them as those who worship the God of Israel. Thus they will be distinguished from those who are marked with the number of the Beast, and who worship his image. But in any case it is evident that these servants of God are those Israelites who cling to the orthodox faith of their fathers, and to whom Paul probably referred when he spoke of "the remnant out of Israel" (Rom. 11:1-5), who were faithful to covenant obligations in so far as these requirements of the law of Moses were understood by them.

The Number of Sealed Ones

And John heard the number of those that were sealed: One hundred and forty-four thousand out of all the tribes of the children of Israel. That number is the product of twelve thousand sealed ones in each of the twelve tribes mentioned by name in the list given. The number twelve stands for God's perfect work and being multiplied by itself, and again by one thousand clearly indicates that the number one hundred and forty-four thousand is used symbolically rather than definitely; hence the number of sealed ones signifies both perfection and completion. In some of the tribes the number might be more than twelve thousand and in others less, but in each tribe there will be the full number sealed to which none will be added and from which not one will be omitted; for when the angels have finished their appointed work of sealing the servants of God in their foreheads, the work will be perfectly and completely accomplished. And be it remembered that these sealed ones are taken out of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

A Great Unnumbered Multitude

> "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God Who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (ch. 7:9-12).

Jesus declared, "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." And that unnumbered multitude consisted every one of them of penitent sinners. It is little wonder then that the joy of the angels was unbounded and that it could find appropriate expression only as they prostrated themselves before the throne and worshiped God; for they recognized who this great multitude were, and they knew how they came to be in heaven before the throne and before the Lamb.

The Palm-Bearing, White-Robed Redeemed

> "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God. and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (ch. 7:13-15).

John was unable to answer the question of the elder concerning the white robed, palm-bearing multitude, and the information he received was a further revelation to him of the incomprehensible love of God and of the riches of divine grace. This great multitude, who through their own carelessness and spiritual indifference had been left behind when the True Church had been caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and who had been chastened in the great tribulation, were

nevertheless in heaven among the redeemed. And to think that that unnumbered multitude who were saved just before this present evil age ended,—saved so as by fire (1 Cor. 3:15), will be only a part of those who are saved by grace through the blood of the Lamb. These all have their place in heaven as God's servants although they neglected to secure for themselves the higher rewards of glory when they had the opportunity.

Saints Who Like Thomas Believe Only What They See

After godly fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, are caught up to meet the Lord in the air just before the judgments are sent on the earth (Lk. 17:34-37); and after these godly ones have suddenly disappeared from their homes without leaving behind them a word of explanation; and after relatives, neighbors and friends, unable to find any trace of them, have given up the search in despair of ever being able to locate them, or to explain their disappearance, then many such will recall to mind the BLESSED HOPE which these loved ones cherished, about which they often spoke one to another, and in which they tried to interest others, but with little success, and possibly only to be laughed at as extremists or ridiculed as fanatics.

The truth will then flash upon the mind of these persons, of whom many will be themselves lukewarm professors of Christ; they will understand and realize just what has happened, and then also they too will sincerely accept the truth so plainly taught in Scripture, but which like other supernatural events seemed so improbable that they preferred to reason themselves into infidelity rather than to walk by faith. As a result they will become truly converted and give themselves whole-heartedly unto the Lord, trusting in the precious blood and enlisting in His service with only the regret that they had neglected so to do when first they accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

Martyrs of the Tribulation Period

It will be their turn then to be laughed at and ridiculed because of their faith and hope and practical godliness. But they will refuse to be turned aside, and living godly in Christ

Jesus they shall suffer persecution at the hands of Antichrist and the false prophet and at the hands of those who have the mark of the Beast on their foreheads whom they have steadfastly opposed, and whom they have exhorted to repent while yet there was time. In rendering this service for Christ and for humanity, as the result of their faith they are said "to have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

But in addition to those who formerly were lukewarm professors there will be multitudes who had never made any profession of Christ; rather they made excuses whenever they were asked to accept the offers of salvation, and they were content to live godless and wicked lives. These persons were hardened against the gospel; but divine judgments will bring them to repentance and to the confession of their sins. Then like the publican they will cry to God for mercy and look to Jesus for help and deliverance, and He will save them also, yet so as by fire.

Of these redeemed ones many will be slain during the tribulation period for Christ's sake; thus they will win for themselves a martyr's crown and a place of honor and reward in the Kingdom, and some may even fulfil the prediction of Jesus when He said, "Of a truth I say unto you, there are last that shall be first, and there are first that shall be last" (Lk. 13:30).

Satan's malicious and abominable works of iniquity will be continued down to the very end of this present age. But on the other hand during the opening of the last three seals the wicked devices of the Devil will be brought to naught by the divine judgments that then will be visited upon the earth. In connection with the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowls of the wrath of Almighty God, the character of these judgments is revealed, and one of their results at least is shown in this vision of consolation in which appear a multitude of the redeemed which no man could number, out of all nations and kindred and peoples and tongues, . . . clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.

Godliness Is Great Gain

Concerning these white robed palm-bearers it was declared:

> "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (ch. 7:16, 17).

The advice given by Jesus to all who are much concerned and even anxious about what they shall eat and drink, and about the raiment they shall put on is, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Here then we see the promise fulfilled: No more hunger nor thirst; no more suffering from the extreme of heat or cold, but there will be ample provision for all human needs under the shepherding of Jesus Christ, the Lamb Who is in the midst of the throne, and all tears will be wiped away by the hand of the loving Heavenly Father. Surely godliness is great gain; it has promise both for the life that now is and for that which is to come.

The Opening of the Seventh Seal

Having thus received the comforting vision in which it is revealed that the great heart of the Son of Man will be satisfied with nothing less as a reward for the travail of His soul than a great multitude of redeemed ones, the number of which is beyond the power of man to compute, and having been shown that this multitude will be gathered out of all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues, the Seer is ready to announce the event which will bring to a close this present evil age:

> "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" (ch. 8:1).

It was the breathless silence of wonder and amazement caused by the terrible majesty of the events that will follow close on the heels of the opening of this last seal. How that silence was broken will be learned from what has been revealed in connection with the trumpet and bowl judgments. But before the vision of these last events is recorded there is yet to be revealed

God's dealings with Israel during the latter days, or the last seven years of their history under the Abrahamic Covenant. And it is to this people who are neither Christians nor Gentiles, and who are to be dealt with under their own Covenant and not under the New Covenant in Christ's blood, nor yet under the Rainbow Covenant that attention is directed at this point.

Chapter XVIII

ISRAEL "IN THE LATTER DAYS"

The Last One of Daniel's Seventy of Sevens

Thus far this prophecy, in connection with the seven epistles, has covered the entire history of the Visible Church of Christ during all of the dispensation of the grace of God. That history ends when the Church is fully ripe for apostacy, or when there occurs "the falling away" which the apostle makes contemporary with the

> "Revelation of the lawless one (the Antichrist), who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God (in Jerusalem), showing himself that he is God" (2 Thes. 2:3, 4).

Under the opening of the first four seals the prophecy has forecast the history of Gentile world power, or the times of the Gentiles, from the day Christ ascended to His Father to receive His Kingdom until the world, heedless of its day of grace and of opportunity, finally rejected our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and the only true God, for the Antichrist who will be accepted by the world as its emperor, and worshiped as a being above all gods, and higher than the Highest.

The day of grace will then end both for the apostate Church and for the godless Gentile nations of the earth. Then under the opening of the remaining three seals the prophecy continues and reveals how at that time God once again will interest Himself in the natural seed of Abraham, and how by the merciful trumpet judgments God will chasten and so prepare Israel for its place and reward in the Kingdom age when every promise of the Abrahamic Covenant will be fulfilled to the very letter.

The Altar with the Golden Censer

> "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God: and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne" (ch. 8:2, 3).

It will not be difficult to recognize this scene as typically Jewish: The altar, the censer and the incense all and each have a place in the ceremonial worship of that people (Ex. 30:7-9; 40:26, 27). The angel, therefore, is performing here merely the same priestly rites as those to which Aaron was appointed, including the burning of a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout the generations. The angel at the altar probably is Jesus Christ the Great High Priest Who at that time will make intercession for the sins of Israel, offering the prayers, of which the incense was the type, of all the Saints (Israelites) upon God's altar.

God Had Regard to the Incense

> "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightning, and an earthquake" (ch. 8:4, 5).

During all these many centuries since the suspension of their Covenant, pious Jews have never ceased to offer their prayers to God on behalf of themselves, their people and their holy city Jerusalem, but God has refused to hear or regard the voice of their supplication (Isa. 1:15). But now Christ, Whom the Father heareth alway, Himself intercedes on behalf of Israel: therefore the incense with the prayers of the saints is admitted before God; and for Him to hear prayer is to regard and to answer the suppliant (1 John 5:15), although His way of answering prayer may not alway correspond with the expectation of the petitioner. And at this time the prayers

of God's people Israel will be answered; God will regard their cry and once again begin to deal with them, but at first it will be with the chastening of a Father in order to take away their sins (Heb. 12:4-8). This is suggested by the thunderings, lightnings, etc., suggestive of divine displeasure, reproof and condemnation.

Trumpet Judgments Sent on Israel

> "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" (ch. 8:6).

The trumpet judgments begin with the opening of the fifth seal when the cry of the souls under the altar was heard by God. Under this seal the first four trumpet judgments will be visited upon Israel which at that time will have returned to the land of their fathers,—the land of Palestine, and they will have made their Covenant also with the Antichrist (Isa. 28:15-19). That nation is to be redeemed by judgments after which every thing will be restored as at the first (Isa. 1:25-28; 10:20-27). Hence the angels with the trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Any one at all familiar with Old Testament history will understand at once the place and the importance of the trumpets both in the Mosaic ritual and also in the national life of the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah. The trumpets in the hand and at the mouth of their priests issued the divine call for that people to gather together for their worship and for the observance of their national feast days, in times of peace and in times of war, the trumpets assembled the fighting men to their standards for the defense of their country. To the gospel trump which, under the opening of the first four seals, had been the divine call to the Gentiles from among whom God was to take out a people for His name (Acts 15:15), and only after that work was accomplished was He to return and build again the tabernacles of David, which had fallen down (v. 16),—to that trump the Israelites had paid no heed, but instead, for the greater part, they had even stopped their ears lest they might hear and be converted.

Israel Will Heed Their Own Trumpets

But when God begins to speak to this people again by the use of their own trumpets,—a sound with which they are perfectly familiar, and one which the more devout at least of that nation have never ceased to hear with any feeling other than reverence, the result will be entirely different. After the opening of the fifth seal the gospel trump will not be heard, but the Jewish trumpets will then be heard by Israel. God has not spoken to them through those trumpets since the suspension of the Abrahamic Covenant, and now that He addresses them by the use of these instruments it is evident that He intends to deal with them once again under their own Covenant. And, as already explained, there are yet seven years remaining for its completion according to Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy of Sevens.

And as these trumpets are divided into two divisions, the first four trumpets to be followed by the three "woe" trumpets, and as the time given under the last three trumpets is just forty and two months, or three and one half years, it is evident that the time within which the first four trumpets will be completed will also be three and a half years.

The First Trumpet Judgment

> "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up" (ch. 8:7).

This is the same as the seventh judgment sent upon Egypt (Ex. 9:18-26). It will be a supernatural hail storm accompanied with terrific lightning that will cause great loss of property and life among men and beasts the same as occurred in the land of Egypt. The hail and the fire, as they appeared in the vision to the Seer, were mingled with blood which indicates the destruction of life that was caused by the storm. Yet this, and all succeeding judgments under the trumpets, were tempered with divine mercy. In this judgment, while all green grass was burnt up, the third part only of the trees was burnt up. For the greater part, the trees of Palestine are the date,

the fig, the olive and other trees that supply food for man; hence only a portion of the trees are destroyed, while the grass, which is food only for cattle, was all burnt up. Here is provision for man's life, but with great loss of possessions, because the cattle must either die or be sold at a mere nominal price to those who might have on hand food to provide for them.

The Second Trumpet Judgment

> "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood: and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed" (ch. 8:8, 9).

This is the same as the first judgment sent upon Egypt when the Nile was smitten in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and the water of the river was turned to blood, and the fish that were in the river died (Ex. 7:20, 21). The sea is the one so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament as the sea of the Plain, or the Salt sea; and in the New Testament it is called the sea of Galilee, or lake Gennesereth, or Tiberias. Into this sea was cast what appeared like a great mountain burning with fire. This will probably be a meteor of most unusual size and the nature of it will be such as to cause part of the water of the sea to become blood,—at least in the vision it had the appearance of blood. The result was a further destruction of life and the loss of possessions.

Whether the fraction one third expresses a certain portion or an absolute quantity is relatively immaterial; in either case the hand of mercy appears since the effect of the judgment is limited in the extent of the damage wrought. However, the real significance of the one third will appear later and it seems to indicate that Israel suffers only half as much as will the Gentiles who are the subjects of the Antichrist.

The Third Trumpet Judgment

> "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of

> waters: And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (ch. 8:10, 11).

This judgment is in much similar to the preceding and will be caused by a meteor, or shooting star, which, bursting as it approaches the earth, will fall upon the rivers and fountains of waters. It is credibly reported that on Feb. 10th, 1896, a remarkable meteor exploded over the city of Madrid. Though it appeared during the daylight, its brilliancy was such as to dazzle the eyesight of persons in Madrid and to make it visible as far away as Gibraltar. It exploded at a height of about fifteen miles, and so tremendous was the detonation that it was heard and its tremors felt over a radius exceeding fifty miles.

The particular star seen in this vision was called "Wormwood," a word meaning "undrinkable." The result not only caused the waters to become bitter, but also poisonous, and many men died of the waters. Since the former meteor appeared as a great burning mountain, and this one burned as it were a lamp, it is possible that the whole nation of Israel will suffer from the former judgment in the loss of possessions, while in this judgment it will be only the false teachers among the people whose lives will be destroyed. In the imagery of Scripture a mountain sometimes is used symbolically of a kingdom, and teachers are frequently designated under the figure of a lamp. If this distinction is to be made, then this judgment may be the fulfilment of the prophecy concerning the false prophets of whom God declared:

> "I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land . . . in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied" (Jer. 23:15, 20, 21, 30, 34).

In any case, the judgment while severe is also mercifully limited.

The Fourth Trumpet Judgment

> "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise" (ch. 8:12).

In connection with this judgment no mention is made of any loss either of life or of property, yet the effect of such strange and unnatural conditions appearing in the sun, moon and stars would certainly arouse apprehension and cause terror to spread among the people, especially since within so short a period they had already experienced the visitation of the preceding three terrible divine judgments.

It must not be forgotten that in all these trumpet judgments God is dealing with His own chosen people, the children of Israel and the natural seed of Abraham. God cast away this people because of their sins, and permitted them to be sorely afflicted and persecuted by the Gentile nations among whom they were scattered during all these centuries. Now at the time of this vision, God's purpose is not to destroy that nation, but rather He would chasten them as a father would a wayward child with no other purpose or wish than to bring that child to repent of and to forsake its evil doings so that it might enjoy the father's love, blessing and protection. This will be the time also when God's judgments are abroad in the earth, and when they are sent forth, as is revealed in this prophecy of the Revelation, not upon Israel only, but also upon all Gentile nations as well, and the divine purpose is that the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness. It is those whom the Lord loveth that He chasteneth, and He scourgeth every child whom He receives in order to take away sin, the abominable thing which He hates and of which the wages is death. By every means therefore, it is God's purpose to win man if possible from his sins; for He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Chapter XIX

THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

The Woe Trumpets

After Jacob's conversion his name was changed to Israel. Later when the Church was organized and when many of the Jews believed on Christ the Christian Jews were spoken of as "the Israel of God or the true Israel" (Gal. 6:16), while those who remained faithful to the law of Moses continued to be called Israel even though they did not accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah. They were the children of the flesh (Rom. 9:8), and it was to these two divisions of the same people that Paul referred when he said, "They are not all Israel, who are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6), or Israelites. But these Israelites are further divided in Scripture. Those who continued faithful to the Abrahamic Covenant are spoken of as "the remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5), while those who were indifferent even to the law of Moses were referred to as "the house of Jacob" (Lk. 1:33).

And to this present time this distinction is maintained, only today the two classes are known as "the Orthodox" and "the Reformed" Jews. The former still faithfully observe the law of Moses, while the latter have practically lost faith even in their own Scriptures, and have tried to become identified with the world even though, to some extent, they still observe a form of godliness.

The first four trumpet judgments and also the first four bowls of the wrath of God, four being the number of the earth, occur simultaneously and bring divine judgments upon all the inhabitants of the earth. But the judgments visited on the nation of Israel, including both "the remnant" and "the house of Jacob," are limited to those described under the sounding of the trumpets; while both the trumpet and the bowl judgments

are visited upon the Gentile nations which form the empire of the Antichrist. The remaining three of the trumpet and bowl judgments follow immediately and continue to the very end of the age. They cover the whole period mentioned in Scripture as the great tribulation which ends with the day of the Lord. A divine messenger announces the coming of the judgments:

> "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound" (ch. 8:13).

The last three trumpets, three being the number that stands for the Trinity and for a divine work, also call forth universal judgments; but now a difference is to be made. With the sounding of these trumpets begins the great tribulation which will continue for three and a half years, or forty and two months, and as will appear later in the prophecy a distinction is made between those who fear God and those who continue to rebel against His will. The persons and things that are not to be harmed by these judgments include the sealed remnant, the temple in Jerusalem, the altar, the worshipers in the temple and also the two witnesses who are described as the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the whole earth (Zech. 4:2-7). Between all such persons and things as have been separated unto God; and all other persons and things, including the godless house of Jacob, a difference is now to be made even as in the days when God plagued the Egyptians, but spared His own people who for the time were dwellers in the land of Egypt.

Prophecy Fulfilled Concerning Israel's Return to the Land of Palestine

It is evident, therefore, that before the time when the trumpets begin to sound there will have been a complete and literal fulfilment of all those Old Testament prophecies that predict the return of Israel, while yet in their blindness and unbelief concerning the teachings and claims of Jesus as their Messiah, to their own land which God gave in covenant to faithful

Abraham and to his seed after him. Further, that people will again become a nation in the land of Palestine, the city of Jerusalem and their temple will be rebuilt, the worship of Jehovah the God of Israel will be observed according to the Mosaic ritual and so the way will be prepared for the fulfilment of the prediction made by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Hebrews (8:7-13).

However, that nation which rejected Jesus as their Messiah will have at that time so little trust and confidence in the care of the God Whom they worship, that they will have accepted the Antichrist as their protector and deliverer (John 5:43), and entered into a covenant with him (Isa. 28:15-18,—the very same covenant which after three and a half years, or forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, or after time, times, and half a time, will be broken by the Antichrist, Dan. 9:27). Then will begin the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:1-9), out of which that portion of the nation shall be delivered only by the return of their Messiah at His Second Advent; for the Antichrist will be at war with them, and to the full end that people will suffer at his hands.

The Fifth Trumpet Judgment

> "And the fifth angel sounded (first woe trumpet), and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit" (ch. 9:1).

This particular star belonged to the order of the spiritual rather than of the material creation. What the Seer beheld in the vision was a spirit of superior order and rank who fell from heaven. And as it is said he "fell from Heaven" rather than that he came down from heaven it is probable that he was one of the fallen angels; possibly even Satan himself, or at least one of the higher orders of fallen spirits who serve under the Devil's command.

The Key to the Bottomless Pit

To this fallen spirit was given the permission, or power (the key) to open the bottomless pit which signifies the lower part of hades, or sheol, in which these spirits are reserved in chains

of darkness unto judgment (2 Pet. 2:4). To those who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, and who choose to honor Satan rather than God, it is God's purpose to let them have the benefit of that choice for a time at least right here on the earth. Hence under this fifth trumpet, the house of Jacob, which has identified itself as far as possible with a godless world, is given over to the power of the Devil. And he, or his agent, having the key to the pit opened it:

> "And there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (ch. 9:2).

Here then will be plenty of darkness to satisfy those who hate the light. Further, these supernatural judgments that are coming on the earth in due time, and not in the far distant future either, will convince those of their mistake who deny that there is any such thing as the supernatural; for all the judgments described in this prophecy will be as literally fulfilled as were those visited upon Egypt in the days of Moses.

The Infernal Cavalry

> "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (ch. 9:3, 4).

Here are seen satanic agents of evil, but they are under divine control, and cannot go beyond the permission granted them any more than Satan could in the days of Job. They were given power only over those men who had not been sealed (ch. 7:1-8).

> "And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them" (ch. 9:5, 6).

These locusts were not permitted to kill, but only to torment men, including the house of Jacob as being identified with the world, for five months. During that time the suffering of the victims will be such that death would be preferable, but there will be no escape for them from the torment caused by the sting of the locusts.

> "And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, who is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" (ch. 9:7-11).

If any one desires to look upon a picture of the infernal Cavalry he can find it right here. These agents of torment will be demons, or fallen spirits, from the bottomless pit. They will embody themselves in locusts, which in appearance will be transformed into hideous monstrosities, and these satanic agencies will have power to torment men five months. These demons have over them a king, who is the angel or spirit of the bottomless pit, and that there may be no mistaking the identity of his satanic majesty it is revealed that in Hebrew his name is Abaddon, while in Greek it is Apollyon, and both of these names in their respective languages mean "The Destroyer," one of the names of the Devil. This judgment will end the first woe, and there are two others to come.

The Sixth Trumpet Judgment

> "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet (the second woe trumpet), Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates" (ch. 9:13, 14).

The mention of this great river at once directs attention to the countries inhabited by certain of the so-called backward nations,—Mesopotamia, Persia, Arabia, and other similar nations and peoples that constitute, if there be included the adherents to the religions of those peoples, about one half of the present inhabitants of the world. The four angels which are bound, or held as prisoners for the present in the river, are certainly not to be identified as members of the heavenly hosts. Rather they are evil spirits, possibly demons that have taken possession of the rulers of the inhabitants of that portion of heathendom, or more probably they are the demons that possess the people themselves. In either case they may represent the evil spirits of ignorance, superstition, avarice and fanaticism. These demons have long been held in check, or kept under divine restraint, by means of the power and arms of the more advanced and civilized Western nations.

Heathendom Preparing Today for Coming Conflict

However, these backward nations are slowly but surely adopting Western ideas and customs. They are sending today some of their brightest students to be educated in the great universities of civilized nations, and as soon as they are prepared for the work of these students are employed in governmental positions of power and influence. And all of these backward nations are having their armies organized or reorganized and trained by some of the greatest and wisest military instructors available. Thus they are gradually preparing to cast off the yoke of Western civilization that has so often proved itself unjust and cruelly oppressive, and they purpose to seek for themselves a place in the sun after the example of their oppressors from whom they are learning even while to a greater or less extent they also are being exploited.

It is therefore not beyond reasonable conjecture to understand that the second woe directs attention to the time when these backward nations of the East will arise and demand respect for their rights, and avenge themselves against their oppressors. If this be correct, then the four angels, or evil spirits of ignorance, superstition, avarice and fanaticism will

be turned loose on the Western Gentile world, the empire of the Beast.

> "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them" (ch. 9:15, 16).

These evil spirits are prepared for the very moment when their services will be required, and a third part of men will be slain. The city of Jerusalem being on the line of march to the West will be a storm center as so often it has been before in the wars between Gentile nations. These hordes of peoples will probably oppose the armies of the Antichrist a short time before the battle of Armageddon, and afterward they will sign a truce with the Antichrist so that there will be the united armies for the great day of the Lord when God will dash the potsherds of earth together, and break them as a potter's vessel with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9). It will be immense armies that will be marshalled together to fight each other at that time, the number being two hundred million men.

> "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt" (ch. 9:17-19).

What appeared in the vision of the Seer as horses might easily turn out to be the more modern and improved machinery of warfare. John, the beloved disciple, is here merely describing things as they "appeared" to be in the vision, rather than declaring what they were in reality. The description furnished of these horses and their riders, and especially of the means by which life was destroyed by them prove that they were not literal horses, and make it very evident that they were some

kind of engines of war. The third of men who were killed by the fire, smoke and brimstone refers probably to "the house of Jacob" rather than to the inhabitants of the earth. This is a trumpet judgment and attention is still being directed in this part of the prophecy only to God's dealings with Israel. Of these horses and their riders it is declared, "Their power," like modern engines of war equipped to fire from both front and rear, "is in their mouth, and in their tails": and the munition will probably be some kind of poisoned gas.

In any event the scene here described is one of war and of bloodshed that attains to tremendous proportions, yet the result only confirms those who escape the slaughter in their wickedness:

> "And the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (ch. 9:20, 21).

Beyond all controversy such a state of society is desperately wicked, and well deserving of the yet more terrible divine judgments that are described under the pouring out of the bowls of the wrath of God Almighty. Before completing the account of this sixth trumpet judgment that will be visited upon apostate Israel, or the house of Jacob, the Seer next records the vision he received regarding that portion of the nation of Israel that had remained faithful to the law of Moses, and that, therefore, had been sealed, probably with the anointing oil, before the great tribulation began, and who were not to be hurt by any of these plagues that were visited upon the rebellious house of Jacob.

Chapter XX

TRIBULATION OF COVENANT-KEEPING ISRAEL

The Mighty Angel from Heaven

> "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon His head, and His face was as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire: and he had in His hand a little book open: and He set His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when He had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not" (ch. 10:1-4).

It is not difficult to recognize in this angel the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the glorified Son of Man. The description of His person corresponds with that given of Him when John first beheld Him in the vision (Rev. 1:13-15), and the rainbow upon His head unmistakably associates Him with the One Who sat upon the judgment throne when the judgment of the world, or "the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:4-8), first began with the opening of the first seal of the book.

Christ Claims His Possession of the Earth

The little book open in His left hand was the same book that had been sealed with seven seals which no man, other than the God-Man Himself, was worthy to remove and to open the book which contained all the facts duly to establish Christ's title to the earth and the sea as His possession. Now the seals have all been removed; the book is open in His hand, and He sets His feet on the sea and the earth, thus signifying His proprietorship

in the same, even as God had said unto Joshua (1:3) "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses."

The Seven Thunders

Having formally claimed possession of the earth and sea the mighty angel cried with a loud voice. That was the shout of a champion about to engage the enemy in mortal combat (1 Sam. 17:4-10); it was uttered by the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and when He cried seven thunders uttered their voices. John was about to write what the thunders uttered but was forbidden to do so by a voice from heaven. What the seven thunders said was to be sealed up because for the present at least that revelation given to John was not intended to be generally known, and it is useless to speculate concerning the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God. Paul also when he was caught up into Paradise heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Cor. 12:4). Thus these two exceptionally devoted servants of Jesus Christ have been taken into God's confidence and admitted to His council to a degree beyond that granted to any other members of the human family.

No Longer Is Time to Be Allowed

> "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up His hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, Who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (ch. 10:5-7).

The declaration that there should be time no longer means simply that there would be no longer any delay in fulfilling God's promises, given to the prophets concerning the Kingdom, that through all the centuries has remained such a mystery to multitudes of God's children. The time for the complete clearing up of this mystery is here, on the sworn testimony of Jesus,

set for the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound.

The Little Book Open in the Hand of the Angel

> "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And He said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And He said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (ch. 10:8-11).

Obedient to the heavenly voice John took the book and ate it up as the angel directed him to do. It was sweet to his taste but it made his belly bitter even as the angel had predicted When John first saw that book he wept bitterly because no man in heaven or earth or under the earth was able to open it or to look on it. But now the seals have been removed; the book is open and a great change has come about. He can now look on it and even take it in his hand and eat it up as he was told to do.

A Joint-Heir with Christ to the Inheritance

As the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper symbolizes the appropriating of Christ, and of all the benefits that flow from His obedience, death and resurrection; and also the accepting of the obligations and the gracious rewards stipulated in the New Covenant in His blood, so the eating of the little book, which John received from the hand of Christ, signifies that he appropriates to himself the offered right and privilege to become a joint-heir with Christ as an inheritor of the earth with all its honor, glory, power and riches. Before Christ had removed the seals from that book and established His claim to the earth before the judgment throne in heaven, no mere man was worthy to take it into his possession. But now, as it was in the hand of

Christ an open book, it is the privilege of all to whom Christ offers it to take it as their own, as God's children, and therefore His heirs and joint-heirs with His only Begotten Son. This glorious truth was in John's mouth as sweet as honey (Ps. 19:9-10; 119:103; Eze. 2:8, 9; 3:1-3). But having become a possessor with Christ of the inheritance John would be required to share the responsibility of making the facts known concerning the inheritance before a rebellious world, and to endure the reproach and the persecution of those who would oppose and resist Christ's purpose to take possession of His own earth. And it was this fact that caused the bitterness after the book had been eaten (Jer. 15:10; 20:14-18). The time when John must again prophesy before peoples, nations, tongues and kings will be later considered in connection with what follows in this same vision.

Jerusalem to Be Trodden Under Foot Forty-two Months

> "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (ch. 11:1, 2).

The command to "Rise," does not mean that the Seer had been prostrating himself; rather, it is an urgent call to proceed without delay to the appointed work. The reed given him was like a rod, a symbol of office and of authority. It shows that John was duly clothed with power for the performance of the task assigned to him in the temple and about God's altar. The group of worshipers in the temple represents the orthodox Jews, or the remnant, that still cling to the faith of their fathers. They are to be included in the measuring which at once shows that in them God has a peculiar interest. They are to be under His special care and protection, and so they are to be measured along with the temple in Jerusalem and the altar. The court without the temple and the holy city, Jerusalem, were not to be measured because the Gentiles were to be permitted to trample them under foot for forty and two months. Here for

the first time in the New Testament, account is once again taken of time as related to things connected with the history of the nation of Israel.

The Completion of the Four Hundred and Ninety Years

The forty two months, equal to twelve hundred and sixty days or three and a half years, correspond to the last half of Daniel's last one of the Seventy of Sevens, or four hundred and ninety years, within which period the Abrahamic Covenant was to be fulfilled and the anointing of the Most Holy One, the Messiah, accomplished. Daniel's prophecy includes the end of the times of the Gentiles as do also the forty two months which fix the limit to the time when the Gentiles will be permitted to tread the holy city under foot.

Further, as in Daniel's prophecy, it was declared that the coming prince, the Antichrist, after three and a half years, would break the Covenant he had made with many of Daniel's people, and that wrath would be poured out upon that nation until the full end of the period as it had been determined, so here for forty two months, or exactly three and a half years, the holy city Jerusalem is to be trodden under the foot of the Gentiles. And Jesus predicted: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:24). According to this prophecy those times will be fulfilled at the end of the forty two months, and during that same period great suffering and many indignities are to be inflicted upon the inhabitants of that city. But here attention is called to the fact that during that very period God plans to take care of His own, the remnant of Israel, that will be in the city at that time.

It appears useless, therefore, to deny as some do that these forty two months synchronize with the last one of Daniel's Seventy of Sevens, or the last half of the last seven years when God's Covenant with Israel, after having been suspended for all these centuries, will have once again become operative.

The Beginning of the Last Seven Years Also Established

It is not less evident that the beginning of this same seven year period, or the time when the Covenant again became opera-

tive, and when God returned and began to show favor to His people Israel, was when the seven trumpets began to sound. It was then that the twelve thousand out of each of the twelve tribes of Israel are recognized and sealed as God's servants (ch. 7:3-8). This proves clearly that God was then again interesting Himself in that nation, and to some at least of its people He was showing special favor because they were sealed with the anointing oil in order that they might be preserved from harm from the coming judgments. Again, since immediately after the first four seals had been opened the altar arrests attention; and since before any of the trumpets have sounded, the angel of the altar appears, and to him was given incense to be offered with the prayers of all the saints (Israel) upon the altar that was before the throne, it would seem impossible almost that any one should question that at that very time the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy began. Then followed three and a half years of trumpet judgments, and here the last forty two months, which complete the seven years, are expressly shown to date from the measuring of the temple of God, the altar and also the worshipers in the temple.

Time of the Sounding of First Four Trumpets to Witness Fulfilment of Many of the Prophecies

Further, it seems evident that the time of the sounding of the first four trumpets will witness the literal fulfilment of the prophecies concerning Israel and Jacob. Such at least as the following:

> "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth. . . . They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them. . . . Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, HE THAT SCATTERETH ISRAEL WILL GATHER HIM, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he" (Jer. 31:8-11; 32:37-44; Eze. 11:17-21).

Return of Israel to Palestine No Longer Questioned

Less than fifty years ago, when those who believed in the literal fulfilment of the prophecies of God's word declared that in due time God would bring that strange people, the children of Abraham, back to their own land; that Jerusalem would again become the Capital city of the restored Jewish state; that the temple would be rebuilt and dedicated anew to the worship of Jehovah, and that the temple service, according to the Mosaic ritual, would again be instituted, they were laughed to scorn even by Christians, and of course by the Jews. Today, however, there are great multitudes who are not Christians, and who know nothing about the teachings and predictions of prophecy, who nevertheless believe and expect these very things to occur, and that too before a great while. They believe in all these things simply because they know what is going on today in the world.

Zionism and the British Proposal

They know that Zionism is the name given to a plan started some years ago by the Jews themselves for the acquisition of Palestine with a view to establishing their people in the holy land; they know that today even some of the Gentile nations are favorably considering this same plan as possibly the best solution for some of their problems in the near East; they know that following the World War, when Palestine became a protectorate of Great Britain that that nation officially granted permission for the establishment of a Jewish state, and today multitudes of the Jews in all lands are seeking to accomplish the realization of that plan at the earliest possible date.

Such Announcements to Be Read in the Public Press

In these days one may frequently read in the daily papers announcements such as the following which appeared in the *Pittsburgh Gazette Times* of Nov. 8, 1923:

"JEWS TO CELEBRATE HOMELAND"

"The sixth anniversary of the Balfour declaration, establishing Palestine as a national Jewish homeland under a mandate of Great Britain will be celebrated Sun-

> day night at a mass meeting in the Zionist institute, Center Avenue. Isaac Carmel, field secretary of the Zionist organization of America, will speak on 'The Balfour Declaration: a Turning Point in Jewish History.' Dr. Edlis and Dr. H. M. Snitzer also will speak."

God is preparing right now for the return of the Hebrews to the land of their fathers in order that the Scriptures may be fulfilled. Other prophecies of Scripture also are being fulfilled today before the eyes of multitudes, professed Christians and others, who attach but little significance to these observed facts, and to whom the words of Jesus Christ, addressed to the Sadducees, apply: "Ye can discern the face of the sky; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3).

The Two Witnesses

> "And I will give power unto My two Witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will" (ch. 11:3-6).

This continues the vision concerning the measuring of the temple. The Witnesses are clothed in sackcloth which is a symbol of great sorrow and distress among the Jews especially when threatened with national calamity (Esth. 4:1-3). As God's Witnesses, and there are to be two since in the mouth of two Witnesses shall every word be established, they are to prophesy twelve hundred and sixty days, or the entire period of the forty-two months when the holy city will be trodden under foot by Gentile nations composing the empire of Antichrist. These Witnesses will have miraculous power, and will also be invulnerable for the three and a half years, or for the full period during which they will be required to prophesy. Since at that time the true Church will have been removed from the earth there will be none other than these two Witnesses who can believingly and

intelligently testify to the truth as it is in Jesus. Hence they are described as the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

The Witnesses to Be Slain

> "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, kindreds, tongues, and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and a half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them" (ch. 11:7-12).

After their testimony is finished these two Witnesses are to be killed by the Beast, Antichrist, who comes out of the bottomless pit which is the present abode of lost souls (See Scofield's Reference Bible. Footnote on Lk. 16:23). For three and a half days their dead bodies lie in the street of Jerusalem (spiritually called Sodom and Egypt), while their enemies whom they had tormented with plagues sent upon them rejoice and make merry over them. Then the bodies of these prophets will be restored to life and they will be taken to heaven in a cloud,—events that will cause great fear to their enemies.

These and similar other events related in this prophecy are of course most unusual, but there is no reason why they should not be understood literally except by those who deny the supernatural, or by those who are unwilling to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken. If, for the first reason, one refuses to consider these events as literal, then consistency would require that the judgments sent upon Egypt in the time of Moses, and all other miraculous events, including the resurrection and

ascension of Christ, that are recorded in Scripture should be considered as merely symbolic, and one is left to guess at the spiritual sense or meaning. On the other hand, if for the second reason one insists that such unfulfilled events must be regarded as symbolic merely, then he places himself in the class with those whom Jesus reproved for their unwillingness to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

The Two Witnesses Identified

There is much unnecessary speculation regarding the identity of the two Witnesses, and some very far fetched and absurd explanations have been given concerning this question. Instead of being considered as persons, as they are clearly shown to be, they have been regarded by some expositors as two systems or organizations, such as the Church and Christian Civil Government. Some have even gone to the extreme of making the particular denomination of which they were members one of the Witnesses referred to by the Seer. Among sane expositors, however, who are willing to show some respect for the rules of exegesis, it is commonly held that one of these Witnesses will be Elijah the prophet whose literal appearing at that time will fulfil the prophecy of Malachi (4:5-6).

Prophecy to be Literally Fulfilled Even Though Fulfilled in Spirit and in Power

True, Jesus said of John the Baptist, "This is Elias (Elijah) which was to come" (Matt. 11:14; 17:11, 12). But as the angel explained to Zacharias, this meant that John would precede Jesus "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Lk. 1:17), and not that he would take the place of the literal Elijah and so fulfil that prophecy. Hence to the chief priests and Levites who came to John himself asking, "Art thou Elias?" John answered, "I am not." And when further pressing the question they inquired, "Art thou that prophet" (meaning the one like unto Moses, or the Christ, Whom God had promised to raise up for this people)? John answered, "No" (John 1:19-21). Jesus and John did not contradict each other since Jesus merely meant that "in spirit and in power" Elijah was present in the

person of the Baptist, while John denied that he was the fulfilment of that prophecy.

It was also declared about the same time, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." To this fact both Jesus and John gave testimony (Matt. 3:2; 4:17), but it was at hand only in the same sense that John took the place of Elijah. Had the Jewish nation improved their day of opportunity, the setting up of the Kingdom would have followed immediately after the appearing of Messiah, or Christ, at His First Advent. Then there would have been no need for the literal coming of Elijah as this event was predicted by the prophet Malachi. But this nation did not improve its opportunity; rather it rejected the King. For this reason the Kingdom was taken from them and was to be given to a nation that would yield the fruits (Matt. 21:43). This caused delay because the new "nation of kings and priests," to whom the Kingdom was to be given, had not yet been organized and would not be completed until the Church, which Christ promised to build, had been taken out from among the Gentiles (Acts 15:14).

Further, since both the Jews and the Gentiles had shared the guilt of having killed the Prince of Life, and of having cast Him out of His inheritance, God planned to give them both time for repentance, and to follow this period of grace, according to the Scriptures, with the outpouring of divine judgments on all who persisted in their evil ways. This, therefore, would make necessary the literal fulfilment also of the prophecy of Malachi who predicted the coming of Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord.

There should be no question, therefore, but that Elijah the prophet, representing the dispensation of the Law, will be one of the two Witnesses referred to by the Seer. This is the understanding generally held by all such expositors of the Word who accept the two Witnesses as persons rather than as systems, or as something other if possible even more far fetched and ridiculous.

The Second Witness Also Revealed in Scripture

Regarding the identity of the second Witness there is unfortunately no general agreement. He has been supposed to be

Enoch who walked with God and was translated, thus escaping death which has been appointed unto all men. Others have guessed Samuel the last of the judges, or Moses the law giver, or Daniel the greatly beloved prophet, or Peter, or Paul, or some other one of the worthies of faith, or of the apostles, but all these suppositions have been alike mere guesswork.

If the Scriptures are allowed to be their own interpreter, then there need be no speculation; for the identity of the second Witness is as clearly revealed in the Word itself as is the first of these Witnesses. Recall the fact that after Peter's fall and restoration to the office of apostleship Jesus predicted the manner of his death by which he would glorify God. Apparently, at that moment seeing John the beloved disciple, Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" The reply was, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me." Were this the end of that incident then Christ's reply was merely a rebuke to idle curiosity. But the incident did not end there. John adds this significant statement:

> "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said *not unto him, He shall not die,* but, *if I will that he tarry till I come,* what is that to thee?" (John 21:20-23).

This correction of a false report makes it very clear that a man may even die, and for a time be taken away from this earth, as was the case with John, and yet in some way and by some means, he may be permitted, previous to the return of Christ, to be here on this earth at the very time of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. Thus after his return to earth such an one could tarry till Jesus came.

Now connect the explanation John has given in correcting the false impression received by some from the reply Jesus made to Peter with the revelation of the mighty angel Who is Christ Himself and Who announced to the Seer, or to John the beloved disciple, who had taken the little book out of the angel's hand, "It shall make thy belly bitter." And why this result? Because, as explained to him, "THOU must prophecy again before many peoples, nations, tongues and kings." Since, therefore, it is reasonably certain that the twelve hundred and sixty

days during which these two Witnesses are to prophesy are the last three and a half years required to complete the Abrahamic Covenant, and since this period is synchronous with the great tribulation which is to end with the day of the Lord, and which will be followed immediately by the "appearing and kingdom" of Christ on this earth, it is evident that John the beloved disciple is the second one of these two Witnesses, and that on this very occasion will be fulfilled the Lord's purpose concerning John: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Of course all the intervening time, as lost to Israel under the Abrahamic Covenant, is not reckoned according to God's method of computing time. All these centuries are regarded *a dies non* that count for nothing at all in the carrying out of God's purposes and in the fulfilment of His promises.

And if not at that particular time, and in connection with the prophesying of the two Witnesses, then on what occasion mentioned in Scripture would opportunity be afforded the Seer to prophesy again before peoples, nations, tongues and kings? That will be the last opportunity to testify before such at least as oppose and resist the claims concerning the kingship of Jesus and His crown rights to possess the earth. And it will be the last opportunity for those who will make bitter the condition of any one, and even persecute to the death those daring to advocate such claims as against the then world emperor, the Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, THE ANTICHRIST.

With the Second Advent the Kingdom will be set up; the throne will be established and occupied by the Son of Man Who will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Hence there will be no occasion in the Kingdom age to testify concerning these things before unbelieving opponents who are ready even to kill those who tell them the truth. Beside, prophecy is prediction; it relates to things that are still either in the near or in the far distant future, and not at all to things that are past or present which would be history and not prophecy. But the announcement of the angel is that the Seer should prophesy, rather than that he should merely relate facts that already have been accomplished.

It appears therefore a necessary conclusion that John the beloved disciple, representing the dispensation of Grace, will be

the second Witness. The Two Witnesses, therefore, who are to prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth, are Elijah the prophet, and John the beloved disciple. This fact being established no question remains as to whether John the apostle of our Lord or John the Presbyter whom great scholarship has brought forward to claim for him the honor, wrote this Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

End of the Sixth Trumpet Judgment

> "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (ch. 11:13, 14).

This great earthquake and the results that followed occurred the same hour that the prophets ascended to heaven in a cloud. During the forty and two months of their prophesying they were able by the use of miraculous power to not only defend themselves from harm at the hands of the Antichrist and his followers, but also to inflict great punishment upon their enemies. Thus attention will be centered upon them, and in consequence the covenant keeping Israelites will also be protected from the hate and malice of the same enemies who were thirsting for their blood also. Immediately following the removal of the Witnesses came the earthquake that destroyed the city of Jerusalem and slew part of the inhabitants of the city.

The tenth part and the seven thousand are probably definite numbers used relatively. The tenth part may signify the complete destruction of the city in so far as that might be accomplished by the work of man on account of whose wickedness the earthquake was visited upon the city. So likewise the seven thousand, seven being the number of dispensational fulness or completion, would indicate an indefinite multitude sufficient for the final accomplishment of the divine purpose as it stands related to the rebellious house of Jacob. The men slain in the earthquake evidently refer to those belonging to that rebellious house rather than to covenant keeping Israel; and in this part

of the prophecy it is understood that apostate Christendom, or the Gentile world of humanity, do not appear at all.

So also the remnant who were affrighted, and who gave glory to the God of heaven, will be those of the house of Jacob who survive the earthquake, and who will be in the city at that time. With the removal of the Witnesses and the completion of the second woe, the forty-two months will have come to an end, and this ends also the period of the sixth trumpet. Six is the number of evil, of Satan, and of the Antichrist; hence the evil work of man will have come to a full end for this dispensation. The slaying of those two Witnesses and the following three and a half days of rejoicing over their murdered bodies will be the very last acts of the forces of the devil directed against any of God's people. The end of those twelve hundred and sixty days will also have brought to a close the times of the Gentiles. For them the clock has then struck twelve and their day is gone for ever. Now the seventh trumpet will sound, and according to Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 12: 11), within thirty days thereafter the winepress of the wrath of God will have been trodden without the city; the forces of the Antichrist will have been overthrown and scattered to the winds on the bloody field of Armageddon, and the Antichrist himself, and also the false prophet, will have been cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

The Seventh Trumpet Judgment

> "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this world are become the KINGDOM of our Lord, and of His anointed one (the true Church, the Bride of the Lamb); and He shall reign for the AGE of the ages" (ch. 11: 15).

The mighty angel Who had come down from heaven had declared to His beloved disciple, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished." And here the mystery is cleared up; not by any mere human testimony even though it be that of inspired prophets and apostles of Jesus Christ, but rather by the great voices in heaven. It is the mystery of the Kingdom concerning which the thought of such a multitude of God's dear

children, from the third century to the present time, has been so terribly confused and muddled. For this sad fact Origen is responsible. He introduced the method of so-called "spiritual interpretation" which substitutes eisogesis for exegesis, and thus is dismissed the Holy Spirit as the Teacher and Guide concerning the truth of divine revelation.

Here it is revealed that the kingdom is a material entity; it includes all the kingdoms of this material earth, and this is the fact whether it be described in Scripture as the Kingdom of God because He will establish it, or the kingdom of heaven which reveals its character and supreme object as not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, or the Kingdom of God's dear Son because Christ will sit in its throne, or the kingdom prepared for God's children from the foundation of the world, this habitable earth, because it is the Father's good pleasure to give such the kingdom as joint-heirs with Christ,—it matters not how described for in any case when the seventh angel begins to sound, Jesus Christ, the only rightful Proprietor, becomes the actual Possessor of all the kingdoms of this world, and He shall reign as King for the age of the ages.

The Witness of the Four and Twenty Elders

> "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, Who art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them who destroy the earth" (ch. 11:16-18).

It is little wonder that the twenty-four elders, representative of the risen saints, prostrate themselves before the throne and worship God. They witness to His Omnipotence, to His Eternity and to His benign purpose to come again and take possession of this portion of His creation. They witness to the fact that He has taken His great power and reigned over earth's

inhabitants. And as the result of this renewed exercise of His sovereignty, exhibited by sending on the earth and upon its rebellious peoples the terrible judgments of the great tribulation, the nations were angry and in response His wrath came upon them. How insignificant the anger of the nations in contrast with the wrath of offended Deity! The nations may rage as they please, and the people imagine a vain thing, but

> "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them, in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure" (Ps. 2:4, 5).

Now the time has come, with the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and God is about to speak unto the nations in His wrath. The elders further witness to the fact that then will be the time to judge the righteous dead. Their resurrection began when Christ arose from the dead; it will be continued at Christ's appearing for the gathering of the saints together unto Himself, and it will be finally completed at the very beginning of the Kingdom Age. All such of the dead will have part in the first resurrection, but every man in his own order. Then also will be the time that God will reward His servants the prophets, and His saints, and all that fear His name, small and great,—all such shall then be rewarded according as every man's work shall appear, and then those who have destroyed the earth shall themselves be destroyed. Such will be the praise and adoration of the elders as at that time, the sounding of the seventh trumpet, they unite in the worship of God.

The Temple Opened in Heaven

> "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail" (ch. 11:19).

The ark of the testament seen in the opened temple was God's Covenant with faithful Abraham which then will have been completely fulfilled. The four hundred and ninety years having ended, God is ready to fulfil His promises, and to distribute to Abraham and to his seed the blessings. The light-

nings, voices, thunderings, earthquake and hail are all connected with the last plague that fills up the wrath of God. The results will appear when the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath is considered. However, these judgments will not affect Israel, nor yet that portion of the house of Jacob which returned to their allegiance, and gave due glory to the God of heaven before the seventh angel sounded. Hence this final judgment in the great and dreadful day of the Lord, while referred to here, yet is not fully revealed in this vision because only God's dealings with the seed of Abraham are here shown. His dealings with Gentile nations appear later in this prophecy.

Chapter XXI

SATAN'S ENMITY DIRECTED AGAINST ISRAEL

Visions Preparatory to the Bowls of Wrath

Preparatory to the sending forth of the seven epistles which predict the character and condition of the Visible Church from the beginning to the end of the dispensation of the grace of God, the Seer received the vision of the glorified Son of Man walking in the midst of the churches and holding in His hand, under His own control, the angels or spirits of ministry, who represent the churches.

Also, before the opening of the first four seals during which appear the character and condition of the Gentile world as ruled by Satan its prince, and before the opening of the remaining three seals during which are described the character and condition of unbelieving Israel whom God had cast away for the time, John is called up to heaven to behold the Occupant of the rainbow throne of judgment, the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, the Holy Spirit of God in dispensational power and fulness, and especially the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb that had been slain, each and all of whom have an interest and a part to take in the affairs of this earth as they have been carried on ever since Jesus ascended.

Likewise, before the sounding of the first six trumpets, the Seer has a vision of the sealed ones out of all the tribes of Israel, of the innumerable multitude of the redeemed of every nation who have come out of the great tribulation, of the altar, of the angel (Christ) with the golden censer offering much incense, with the prayers of (Hebrew) saints, the smoke of which ascended up before God; and before the seventh trumpet sounded he received a vision of covenant-keeping Israel and of God's two Witnesses.

So now, following the same plan, before the outpouring of

the bowls of the wrath of God Almighty, John has a vision that reveals the character and condition of the whole house of Israel, of Satan the accepted god of the age, of those who will be the Devil's chief agents during the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, of the beasts out of the sea and out of the earth, of the harvest of the earth and of the vintage of the vine of the earth both of which are to be reaped by the glorified Son of Man just before the present evil age comes to an end. Only after these things will the way be prepared for the Kingdom age and its blessings.

The First Wonder Seen in Heaven

> "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" (ch. 12:1, 2).

The heaven here referred to is not the heaven of the judgment throne; rather, it is the heaven of the stars, or the sky that is above the earth. The exalted position and the description of the woman, according to Scripture imagery, signify that she is enjoying divine fellowship and favor; God has blessed her. She is clothed with the sun which signifies that she has knowledge and understanding of spiritual truth. She has put from her and placed under her feet the moon, the lesser light that rules only the darkness of this world, and which represents mere human wisdom and understanding with all its absurd theories and foolish speculations regarding all things spiritual, especially the great truths of divine revelation which God has graciously given for man's learning rather than for dispute and denial. Like the prodigal in the far country, who when he came to himself at once arose and resolved to return to his father and to his father's house, so this woman has come to herself and has returned to God Who has had mercy upon her and abundantly pardoned her. And as the fatted calf, the best raiment and the ring were provided for the returned prodigal of the parable, so for this returned daughter there is brought forth the crown of twelve stars and it is placed upon her head.

The Royal Tribe of Judah

This woman represents the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe of king David and of David's Son Who is also his Lord, even Jesus Christ. The crown of twelve stars is the diadem of the house of David whom God anointed to reign over the twelve tribes of Israel.

Here then appears to the Seer this Woman restored to her rightful place among her brethren, and exalted to the heaven because she has made her way right with God. The tribe of Judah, or the Jews as they are now called, were greatly hated by their own brethren (Isa. 9:21), and because of the great wickedness of the people of that tribe God refused to regard even the entreaties of the prophet on their behalf, and declared He would remove them into all the kingdoms of the earth. But at the same time God also promised that if they would return to Him then He would exalt them, and make them to be a blessing and a protection to their brethren (Jer. 14:19-22; 15: 1-21). Further, in the day of deliverance from the terrible one, the Antichrist, God promised to save Judah first (Zech. 12:7), that in that day that tribe might share the glory of the house of David and of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

But before honor cometh humility. This woman whom the Seer beheld exalted, gloriously arrayed and crowned, is seen to be with child, and in anguish because of her birth pangs, she crieth out. Her terrible anguish signifies the remorse and godly sorrow of true repentance that will be experienced when the conviction that Jesus Whom she crucified was indeed her divine Lord takes hold of this woman and is ready for birth. The old prophet Isaiah (26:16, 17) records the song that shall be sung in that day in the land of Judah, and the song of its people, the members of that same tribe, of whom he says,

> "Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs: so have we been in Thy sight O Lord."

Such then will be the anguish of that people, comparable only with the pangs of a woman in travail, in the day of dawning

consciousness that will bring to the birth the conviction that the lowly Nazarene was in very truth God's anointed Messiah, and that through all the past centuries they have despised and rejected their King, the Son of David and the Son of God Whom their fathers helped to crucify and invited the curse of His blood to rest on themselves and on their children.

The Second Wonder Seen in Heaven

> "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, (waiting) for (his opportunity) to devour her child as soon as it was born" (ch. 12:3, 4).

In this imagery the great red dragon is Satan; his seven crowned heads represent all the rulers or kings then on the earth in the empire of the Beast, the Antichrist. The ten horns set forth figuratively the ten kingdoms, or the ten toes of Daniel's image, over which the earth-kings rule by permission of the Devil who possesses and claims the right to give the power and glory of these kingdoms to whomsoever he will. The stars drawn by his tail and cast to the earth are those of the house of Jacob, the undevout and unbelieving Israelites, who will make their Covenant with the Antichrist. Such persons, as God's covenant people, hold an exalted position, even as the stars in the firmament, but in league with the Antichrist, they are cast down to the earth from the position which is theirs under the Abrahamic Covenant. Before this woman stands Satan to devour her child. This signifies the satanic effort to destroy all conviction or consciousness in the thought of the natural seed of Abraham concerning the truth and reality that Jesus Christ is in very deed their promised Messiah. This conviction probably will come at first to the tribe of Judah; later it will be shared by the other tribes of Israel. Hence in this vision Satan is seen standing before the woman, Judah, to destroy if possible such a conviction at its very birth.

The Child Who Will Rule All Nations

> "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (ch. 12:5, 6).

In spite of all Satan can do to prevent it the conviction concerning the true Person and character of Jesus Christ will mature in the mind and thought of Judah. That fact is here symbolized as a birth: the child was born. But along with the conviction that Jesus was her child, and when with the love of a mother for her first born this woman, Judah, was ready to receive and embrace her child, then came also the consciousness that the child had been taken from her; for He was caught up to God and to His throne. She was thus bereft of the Son to whom she looked to rule the Nations, and in that moment of keen sorrow and disappointment the words of the prophet will probably give expression to the thought of Judah:

> "We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind: we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth: neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen" (Isa. 26:18).

In the moment of conscious possession of the true Messiah He was lost to her, and so the Gentile nations retained their power, and at that very time their great armies were advancing to besiege Jerusalem. For since Antichrist had broken the covenant and had proclaimed himself God in their temple they had probably refused to recognize or worship him; hence that nation was to be further subjected to persecution, especially that portion of the nation, Judah, which had given birth to the man child and now lamented His having been taken away. But this woman is then comforted (Isa. 26: 19-21), and obeys the call to flee into the wilderness to the place prepared for her where God would protect and provide for her during the twelve hundred and sixty days, or three and a half years. The place prepared for this woman in the wilderness is not revealed but it will probably be somewhere in the mountains that surround

Jerusalem and at no great distance from the holy city. Thus before the siege actually begins it will be possible for believing Jews to flee thither and find safety; for in some way and by some means God will protect and provide for His own people that put their trust in Him (Matt. 24:15-28).

The War in Heaven

> "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (ch. 12:7-9).

Among the angelic hosts who serve God there is both order and rank. And archangels, of whom Michael is one, belong to the superior rank and direct the work of subordinate angels. These archangels appear to be appointed by God to look after the welfare of different nations, and Michael is the great prince who stands for the Jews (Dan. 12:1).

Of course the wisdom of modern scholarship laughs to scorn such suggestions as being nothing of more worth than the ignorant superstitions and folk lore of a very primitive people who had not sprung quite as far from the state of being monkeys as these moderns claim they have sprung, because they are possessed of much greater and of unusual springing ability. But this same infidel scholarship sneers at everything supernatural, and those who believe in the supernatural, and who believe in the Bible as a supernatural revelation will be satisfied to consider themselves members of a race which God created in His own likeness and image; to believe also that the race is fallen and doomed to perish except as saved by grace through the precious blood of the Son of God, which was shed on Calvary for the remission of sins, and to believe all other truths taught in the Bible, including the truth revealed concerning the holy angels, and not less to believe the truth taught concerning the fallen angels of whom that old serpent, the Devil, is the chief.

And as this book is written for humble believers in Christ

rather than for the boastful and proud rejectors of the only Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, it is proposed to present what the Scriptures teach without any concern for the scorn and sneers of infidelity.

And on the authority of the Bible we know that today Satan is the prince of the powers of the air and that these powers are his angels who serve under his command (Eph. 2:2). Here, therefore, when God's people, Israel, are about to be scourged by the Gentile nations, impelled by Satan to perform evil deeds; behold, there is war in heaven, or in the sky or air: Michael and his angels fight against the dragon and his angels with the result that these satanic forces are cast out into the earth, and no more will they be allowed, after that event, to direct the affairs of earth from their vantage point in the air.

The Triumph of Good Over Evil

> "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (ch. 12:10, 11).

These forces of evil, under the command of Satan who deceiveth the whole world, although cast out into the earth will be permitted for a brief period to continue their evil work among men. But there will be no longer opportunity, as there evidently is today, for the accuser, the Devil, in any wise or by any means to influence God's relation to or His dealings with the children of men, and especially with the seed of Abraham. At that time the Devil's place will be on the earth, and since neither he nor his angels have any faith in prayer, or are willing to approach God through the Mediator, they will have no means whatever for communicating with God Who will then be again interesting Himself in those who are related to Him in the Abrahamic Covenant, and who, therefore, helped by divine grace, will be able to overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by their faithful testimony even unto death. Hence the heavenly voice proclaims:

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (ch. 12:12).

Since in that day the time remaining to the Devil will be exceedingly limited, he will redouble his efforts to push forward his evil plans to completion, and thus only make more certain and terrible the doom that will overtake his dupes and followers. Hence woe is pronounced upon the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea (the shipmasters and sailors) who will lose their lives in their efforts to save them, while in contrast believing Israel are a cause for the heavens to rejoice because by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony they will gain the victory over Satan, and by laying down their lives they will save them unto life eternal (John 12:25).

Satan's Final Effort to Destroy Faith on the Earth

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (ch. 12:13-16).

Faith is the victory that overcometh the world. It is, therefore, the fortress that Satan must overthrow before he can hope to accomplish his evil purposes. For this reason those who have faith in the Son of God have always been on the line of battle between good and evil, light and darkness, and against them the Devil has ever directed his fiercest assaults. Hence being cast unto the earth his effort is at once directed against the woman, Judah, which brought forth the man child and she becomes the object of persecution; but God had prepared a place for her and she was enabled to escape her persecutor. The great eagle that can move among the clouds above the earth

represents human intelligence; and the two wings of this eagle by means of which God makes it possible for his people to defeat the malice of their persecutor, the Devil, are faith and obedience.

At that time God will give to Judah those wings and they will be used by the Jews to find safety in flight from their cruel enemies who seek to blot out their remembrance from the earth. Thus in the prepared place the woman will be cared for and protected for a time, times, and a half time. According to the Jewish mode of reckoning, "a time" equals a year, "times" equal two years, and "a half time" equals six months. Thus while the holy city was to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles forty two months, or three and a half years, and while the two Witnesses were to prophesy twelve hundred and sixty days, or three and a half years, so also the woman was to be nourished for a time, times, and half a time, or three and a half years. Each of these periods equal and synchronize with the prophet Daniel's "in the midst of the (year) week" at which time the Antichrist will break his Covenant with the Jews, and the end of which time will fill up the four hundred and ninety years that will complete the Abrahamic Covenant, bring in everlasting righteousness and witness the anointing of the Most Holy One, even Christ Jesus our Lord, as the King of all the earth.

The Holy City Besieged by the Army of Antichrist

In the imagery of Scripture water is frequently used as a simile for a great nation or nations (Isa. 8:7, 8; Jer. 46:7, 8), and this evidently is what should be understood by the water as a flood that is cast out of the mouth of the serpent, or that is controlled by his word of mouth.

If there is any one thing more than another emphasized in Old Testament prophecy it is the fact that the natural seed of Abraham, after being scattered among all nations, will in due time return to the land of their fathers, rebuild their city and temple, and that in the latter days of the history of that people which will be the period of great tribulation

> "All nations shall be gathered against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go

> forth into captivity (probably surrender voluntarily in the hope of saving themselves from hunger, wounds, and death), and the RESIDUE OF THE PEOPLE SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF FROM THE CITY" (Zech. 14:2).

That mighty army will be commanded by the Antichrist who will be the incarnation of Satan, and since that army will be under the control of the Devil it is figuratively described as a flood of water cast out of his mouth. Primarily that great army will have been sent forth against the woman, Judah, but since the fact of her flight to a place of safety is unknown to the enemy the city will be besieged and the country all around Jerusalem for many miles, including even the place in which Judah has found a safe refuge, will be in the possession of the attacking forces. Thus even those represented by the woman would ultimately perish but for divine intervention which will be provided; for the earth will open her mouth and swallow up the flood.

It has been suggested that possibly jealousy and strife among the different nations included in that army will cause the enemy as an earth power to destroy himself the same as in former days when Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir first united to destroy Judah, but quickly fell out among themselves and helped every one to destroy another (2 Chron. 20:22-25). However, that would not be the earth opening her mouth and swallowing them up which was "the new thing" that Moses declared would be the fate of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and that was nothing other than an earthquake (Num. 16:30-34). And it will be an earthquake, as revealed in connection with the seventh bowl of wrath, that will swallow up in part the army of the besiegers, and cause the rest of that army to fall back to the field of Armageddon where it will be finally annihilated by the great hail storm.

The Remnant of Her Seed

> "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus" (ch. 12:17).

It is to be noted that while the remnant of her (the woman's) seed keep the commandments of God, it is not said that they *hold,* but rather that they *have* the testimony of Jesus. In other words, although this remnant of Judah have not as yet become Christians, still they have received and so have the testimony concerning Jesus and His claims to be their Messiah. As the hundred and forty-four thousand, gathered out of all the tribes and sealed just before the judgment began, probably represent the remnant of Israel (of the whole nation) (Rom. 11:7-12) who will turn to Jesus as their Messiah and who will be His Witnesses after the removal of the True Church; and as the woman beautifully arrayed and crowned represents the tribe of Judah, as they stand related to Christ before the tribulation begins, penitent, believing and willing to receive and welcome Jesus as their Messiah, so the remnant of her seed represents Jews who appear as worshipers in the temple (Rev. 11:1) who are devoutly religious; for they keep the commandments of God, but who, although they have received the testimony of Jesus probably from the lips of the two Witnesses, still like doubting Thomas will not believe unless they are permitted to look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and unless they have physical demonstration concerning the facts of His death, resurrection, ascension and coming again as King to reign on the earth. Failing to destroy the woman it was against this Jewish remnant that the dragon went to make war.

This remnant will be in the final siege of Jerusalem when it is invested by the nations under the command of Antichrist, and they will be among the chief and most valiant defenders of the holy city (Zech. 10:3-6; 12:2-9). But while during the three and a half years of the siege, their sufferings will be terrible, yet at the end of that time God will be for them a Refuge, and a very present Help in trouble (Ps. 46:1-3), and following the destruction of the nations that have fought against Jerusalem this Jewish remnant shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced and experience the bitterness of true penitence which will assure their pardon and acceptance by the Messiah (Zech. 12:9-14; 13:1).

Chapter XXII

SATAN'S CHIEF AGENTS IN THE LATTER DAYS

The Beast Out of the Sea

> "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast" (ch. 13:1-3).

It is generally recognized that in the imagery of Scripture "the sea" represents merely the populace, or the unorganized mass of people (Dan. 7:1-3; Matt. 13:47-50), and from such a sea the Beast is observed to rise up. This Beast which is seen by John to rise up out of the sea is identical with the fourth beast which appears in the vision given to Daniel (7:7, 8) and in each case the description very closely resembles the description of the great red dragon.

The ten horns represent the confederated ten-kingdom empire which will cover the territory formerly occupied by ancient Rome, and these kingdoms correspond to the ten toes on the great image as seen by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:41, 42; 7:7, 8; Rev. 17:12), and as they will appear in due time to supply the last form of Gentile world power.

As this Beast is observed by the Seer, he has a crown on each of his ten horns, while these crowns are seen on the seven heads of the dragon, rather than on his horns. The explanation for this difference is found in Daniel (7:8) where it is written:

> "I considered the (ten) horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there

> were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like a man, and a mouth speaking great things."

It is thus revealed that although the ten horns or kingdoms remain, there were left only seven crowned heads which will be the final form of the empire as it appears in the description of the dragon. But as the empire appeared to the Seer each of the ten horns was crowned because "the little horn" had not as yet plucked up by the roots the three horns of the Beast, and because the Beast, or the Antichrist, who will finally become the head of this confederacy and the world emperor, had not as yet received from the dragon his power, seat and great authority, as these are now to be conferred upon him as declared in this vision.

The Beast resembled a leopard, although he had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. Each of these three animals appear as symbols of the three empires that preceded Rome (Dan. 7:4-6), and this description of the empire of the Beast would indicate that the characteristics of each of these three animals will be found in it. Thus it will have the swiftness of the leopard to spring on its victim, the tenacity of the bear in the pursuit of its purpose, and the strength and voracity of the lion to overcome opposition and to devour its prey.

To the head of this Beast, the Antichrist, the dragon gives his power, seat and great authority, or in other words, the Beast becomes for a time the very incarnation of Satan even as the Man Christ Jesus possessed the fulness of the godhead bodily, or incarnate in himself. Such then will be the character of the Gentile empire that in the latter days will appear as the last form of world power and that will bear rule over all the earth.

Antichrist the Head of the Beast

This great beastly empire is so designated because of its satanic origin and control, and because its character and spirit will have no relation whatever to things that are true or honest or just or pure or lovely or of good report any more than have the wild beasts of the earth. Rather its spirit will be as ferocious, cruel and blood-thirtsy as that of the great red

dragon, the Devil, who claims it as his own, and who claims also the right to give it to whomsoever he will. The final form of Gentile world power will be thus indeed a beastly empire; it will also have a supreme ruler or head whom Satan has appointed to the place and who is called THE BEAST because he represents the empire, and because he will be Satan's chief agent on the earth at that time to carry out the will, and to perform the work of the Devil. And it is to The Beast that Satan transfers his power, seat and authority. This head of the empire will be the Antichrist who now appears in the vision as that one of the seven beastly heads as it were wounded to death, whose death wound was healed and after whom all the world of the ungodly wondered.

As to this head Dr. Scofield explains as follows:

> "Fragments of the ancient Roman empire have never ceased to exist as separate kingdoms. It was the imperial form of government that ceased; the one head wounded to death. What we have prophetically in Rev. 13:3 is the restoration of the imperial form as such, though over a federated empire of ten kingdoms; the 'head' is 'healed,' i. e., restored, there is an emperor again,—the Beast."

If that interpretation be correct, then since an emperor is neither a new nor a strange thing on the continent of Europe such an explanation entirely fails to account for the fact that the whole world WONDERED after the Beast. The recent German emperor was the imperial head of a federated empire, and today the king of Great Britain is such a head, yet no one wonders at the fact and much less the whole world.

A very different explanation therefore is necessary, and an interpretation is here offered of this head wounded unto death and healed that is acceptable and that is held by many reputable Christian scholars and expositors of the Word who are no less distinguished than was the beloved Dr. Scofield.

The Beast Comes From the Bottomless Pit

Twice at least in the Book of the Revelation the Beast, who is generally understood to be the Antichrist, and who as the head of the beastly empire will be the world emperor, is declared to be one that *ascendeth out of the bottomless pit* (Rev.

11:7; 17:8). Further, the Scriptures plainly reveal that the Beast, or world emperor, is a *man* and not a mere system, or any form of government whether the "imperial" or some other form. This man will serve Satan's purpose during the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles and will resist the Christ in His taking possession of this earth. And since he ascends out of the bottomless pit it follows that previously he must have experienced death, and therefore will be raised from the dead by the power of Satan. Thus as one actually raised to life again the Beast will be presented to the world and under such circumstances it will not be strange that a godless world, including theological professors and other worldly wise men who deny the supernatural, should wonder after the Beast.

Such a possibility should not appear incredible to any one who truly believes the Scriptures today. Satan has been given the power of death (Heb. 2:14), and further, at the time of the first woe trumpet, to him or to one of his chief representatives there will be given the key, or the power, to open the bottomless pit which for the present is the abode of lost souls; and still further, as revealed in the Bible, that power will be used by Satan at that time to open the pit and to release some at least of its occupants who thereupon will enter into locusts in which they will become embodied, and for five months these demons will be permitted to torment the dwellers on the earth. That will be one of the supernatural events of that period and it certainly will be no greater miracle if one such lost soul is released from the pit and permitted by Satan to enter into some dead body which thereupon will be restored to life again. That such is the correct understanding and interpretation of this head of the beastly empire as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, is believed by many intelligent Christian scholars and sound expositors of Scripture.

As a Religious Being Man Must Worship Some Person or Thing

> "And they worshiped the dragon who gave power unto the Beast: and they worshiped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to

> continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (ch. 13:4-6).

Those of mankind who do not worship the true God will and do worship idols of their own choosing and generally of their own making and workmanship. Speaking of the unregenerate world the apostle Paul declared they had "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and to birds and fourfooted beasts and creeping things" (Rom. 1:23). The truth of this statement is still abundantly evident; for go where you will over the earth you find man a worshiper if not of the only living and true God he is nevertheless a worshiper of some thing. And in this beastly empire both the dragon, or the Devil, and also the Beast, or Antichrist, will be worshiped, and the latter especially will be adored and glorified. He also will have a mouth to speak great things and blasphemies the same as "the little horn" of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 7:8). This is the same person mentioned by Paul the apostle when he wrote concerning the coming of the man of sin, the lawless one, the son of perdition,

> "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

And again of this same person Paul declares:

> "Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: that they might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thes. 2:3-12).

Of this person, the Antichrist, who was worshiped as God, and who dared to blaspheme God and them that dwell in the heavens, the Seer adds:

> "And it was given unto him to make war with the (Jewish) saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear" (ch. 13:7-9).

At that time the Israelites will be the only saints of God on the earth, and against them the Beast has power to make war and to overcome them, and he has power also over all nations, and he is to be worshiped by all except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. And this monster of iniquity will have power, and be the world emperor for seven years, or from the time that the Visible Church becomes apostate until the end of the times of the Gentiles. It is during this same time that God once again deals with Israel under the Abrahamic Covenant, and is their Protector especially during the last three and a half years, or the forty two months when Judah and Israel will experience to the full the power, greed, selfish ambition, oppression and cruelty which the Antichrist will exhibit in all of his dealings with them.

The Days Shortened for the Elect's Sake

And this people may well thank God that this terrible reign of the Antichrist will be limited to a comparatively brief period; for at the same time and during all of these seven years, divine judgments will quickly follow one another as God sends them on the earth,—judgments that will become more and more terrifying and destructive of both property and life as the end of the age draws near, and that in some cases will cause physical suffering so severe that men will seek death, which will flee from them, and so they will be compelled to abide on the earth which has become a veritable hell where they are being tormented.

Those who may think that such a picture of conditions on the earth at that time, as they are here described, are greatly overdrawn and grossly exaggerated will do well to ponder these words of the meek, lowly and loving Jesus:

> "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time. No, nor ever shall be (again)."

Think of it! Jesus Himself testifies that the tribulation to be experienced by earth's inhabitants during that period shall be greater than any of the terrible judgments that were ever experienced by the children of Israel in all their past history; greater than the plagues that wasted and desolated the land of Egypt, and that so terrified the Egyptians in the days of Moses; greater even than the judgments that overwhelmed and blotted from off the earth the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And because conditions that will then prevail on the earth are beyond the power of words to exaggerate Jesus added:

> "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved (alive on earth): but for the elect's sake (the children of Abraham) those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:21,22).

Is it any wonder the Seer writes, "If any man have an ear (for the truth of divine revelation), let him hear?" And he adds:

> "He that leadeth into captivity (Satan) shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword (the Antichrist) must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints (the Jewish people)" (ch. 13:10).

This is a note of consolation and also of warning: It is consoling because it predicts the defeat and the entire overthrow of the Beast and of all those associated with him in the unholy war against Christ and His saints. Satan, the great red dragon, will go into captivity for a thousand years. And Antichrist, the Beast out of the bottomless pit, and his followers shall be killed with the sword and so perish from the earth. But it is also a warning to the seed of Abraham, and especially to the Jews, the tribe of Judah, who are the saints, or such as are set apart unto God and in covenant with Him, whose faith and patience will then be tried. During all of the forty two months it will be this people who will be the special objects of the Beast's hatred, and against them in the first place he will

make war. Their suffering and privation in connection with the siege of Jerusalem will be all that hellish cunning and malignity can devise, and thus their patience and faith will be put to a most severe test. These facts are duly revealed so that they may know and understand just what lies before them, and be prepared for the same. But when these conditions are actually experienced, then it will be for their consolation to know that the same Almighty God Who predicted these things concerning them has also promised to deliver them in due time out of all their troubles.

The Beast Out of the Earth

Preliminary to the pouring out of the seven bowls of the wrath of God that will be visited on the earth in the latter days, or during the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, the Seer has already directed attention to six of the characters who will be the prominent actors on the stage of world history at that time within the empire of the Beast: (1) The woman, or the royal tribe of Judah; (2) The red dragon, or Satan; (3) The Child, or Christ Who shall rule all nations; (4) The archangel Michael, the great prince who stands for the Jewish nation; (5) The remnant of the woman's seed, or devout Jews who keep God's commandments, but who have not as yet reached the conviction, or received the faith to believe in Jesus as their Messiah although they have His testimony; (6) The Beast, or Antichrist, who ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, and who appears in his beastly empire which arises out of the sea, or out of the ten kingdoms which are disorganized and in a chaotic condition, probably as the result of anarchy.

Now the Seer introduces the last or seventh (7) character as another beast who will play a very important part in connection with some of the events of that same period.

> "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon" (ch. 13:11).

This other beast is not to be confused with the Beast who ascended out of the bottomless pit and who will be the Head of the ten horned and seven headed beastly empire that is to arise

from the mass of disorganized peoples. This other beast came up out of the earth which probably means that he also will be a lost soul whom Satan will restore to life. He had two horns like a lamb, suggestive of the Lamb of God, but he spake as a dragon and so betrayed his satanic origin. The horns signify both Christian ecclesiastical and civil power which will be claimed by this beast, yet he spake like a dragon, thus proving conclusively that he will be an impostor, a false Christ, posing as the Jewish Messiah Who is Head both of the religious and also of the civil institutions or organizations. He is, therefore, another chief agent of Satan, and he is probably the man against whom Jesus warned His Jewish brethren when He said:

> "If any man shall say unto you (during the time of the tribulation), Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; in so much, that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (God's true Israel). Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chamber (the holy place of the temple); believe it not" (Matt. 24:23-26).

Since this other beast will serve Satan's purpose to deceive and to pose as a counterfeit of the true Messiah, the Son of God, it will be his work to persuade men, especially the children of Abraham, that the Beast is the only true God and that all men ought to worship him.

The Other Beast Exerciseth the Power of the BEAST

> "And he exerciseth all the power of the first Beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first Beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the Beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the Beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live, and he had power to give life unto the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed" (ch. 13:12-15).

Even as Jesus claimed to be one with the Father and to have the power and authority to do His work, so also to make the deception more real the other beast exerciseth the power of the Beast before him. By means of the miracles which he performs he seeks to compel all men to worship the first Beast and to make an image of the Beast; and he had power also to give life to this image so that it could speak and cause all who would not worship the image of the Beast to be killed. Thus he deceived those dwelling on the earth.

Jesus warned His hearers against idolatry and encouraged them to cultivate and to exercise faith in the unseen. But faith is the gift of God. All men do not have faith and it is therefore much easier to persuade one to believe in what he can see rather than to believe in something which he cannot see. This false Messiah, therefore, will encourage idolatry to which as fallen beings men are naturally inclined; hence he will have very little trouble in persuading men to make an image to the Beast and to worship it since it is made to appear that this image has life, that it can speak and that it commands all to worship it under penalty of death.

The giving of life and the power of speech to this image are probably nothing more nor other than satanic tricks the purpose of which is to deceive Satan's dupes by means of lying wonders. There are known today mechanical contrivances that might be employed to make an image move about and even to speak. And to all intents and purposes this other beast had power to give life to the image and to cause it to speak. In the vision granted to the Seer it appeared as though such a result were actually accomplished.

There is no question but that Satan has power to perform many works that are supernatural and wonderful to behold. He can cause demons to enter into and take possession of men and the Bible declares that he does this very thing. It would be a similar work to release a lost soul from its prison house, and to permit it to enter into a dead body which thus, being again united to a spirit, would live because it is only the body without the spirit that is dead. And since Satan has the power of death, or the power to cause the dissolution of soul and body, it is not a thing incredible that he also should have the

power to restore that union. But in neither of these cases does Satan create life which is a prerogative only within the power of God. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that the giving of life to the image of the Beast will be a mere trick and delusion of Satan rather than a reality.

The Mark of the Beast, the Name of a Man

> "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the Beast: for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred three score and six" (ch. 13: 16-18).

Like every false system of religion which has its schemes or devices by which its dupes are compelled to pay liberally for all such benefits as they are supposed to receive, so here the system of religion provided by the other beast permits none either to buy or sell unless he has the mark or the name or the number of the Beast in his right hand or in his forehead.

While the fact is not so declared in Scripture, yet it may be assumed with little fear of being in error that the privilege or license on which depended one's very life was not to be obtained except from those who were duly commissioned to represent the system of State established, controlled and enforced religion, and except at a goodly price that would have to be paid for the same.

Thus the religion that will be provided in due time for the world by this false Christ, or false prophet, will be one of great pretensions; also of fraud, imposture, deception, idolatry, robbery and persecution. There will be the pretension to deity; the fraud of the unity, or relation, existing between these two beasts; the imposture of the first Beast who presents himself as God and of the other beast who poses as the Christ, or the Messiah; the deception of the ignorant multitude by means of lying wonders; the requirement of idolatry on pain of death; the robbery of all in exchange for the inherent right of all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and the persecution

to the death of such as might refuse to buy or sell on such terms and under such conditions.

The supreme head of this iniquitous system will be the Antichrist, the number of whose name is 666, or 616 which is the alternative reading in some manuscripts. And the one notorious person in history, the value of whose name in Hebrew letters, with one slight change, answers to both of these numbers is that cruel, bloodthirsty monster of iniquity whose full name in Hebrew is Neron Caesar. Thus written, the number of the name is 666, while if the "n" be dropped the number of the name as then written, Nero Caesar, is 616. Those who may desire fuller details and answers to objections are referred to Bousset's Commentary. By many authorities it is believed that this Roman emperor, who died by a self-inflicted sword wound is the man whose soul will ascend in due time from the bottomless pit, and by satanic power become incarnate in some dead body. Thus he will live again here on the earth and as the Antichrist he will be Satan's chief agent.

The Identity of the Other Beast

Regarding the identity of the other beast who comes up out of the earth, as did the soul of Samuel at the bidding and enchantment of the witch of Endor (1 Sam. 23:11-14), there is nothing conclusive to be learned from anything known to have been written in the Scriptures. However, in the Bible (1) there are only two men of whom each is definitely called "the son of perdition." The one person is the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3), while the other person is Judas Iscariot (John 17:12). And as Jesus explained, Judas was lost that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (John 13:18; Ps. 41:9). This declaration may include also Scripture that had not yet been written as well as Scripture that had been written at that time; (2) Before Judas went to make his bargain with the chief priests, which led to his betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, it is revealed that *Satan entered into him* (Lk. 23:3). This signifies more than that he was tempted of Satan; it means that at that very time the Devil took possession of Judas Iscariot. Satan desired to get Peter, but failed because the Master had prayed for him (Lk. 22:31); he did get Judas Iscariot; (3)

The one man whom Jesus definitely called a devil, or Satan (diabolos, usually translated "Satan"), was Judas Iscariot (John 6:70-71); (4) He also is declared to have been a thief, and his readiness to hypocritically betray his friend with a kiss for thirty pieces of silver proves that he was given over to covetousness which is idolatry (John 12:16; Eph. 5:5); (5) Of a man capable of such an infamous deed as that of which Judas was guilty Jesus said, It had been good for that man if he had never been born (Matt. 26:24); (6) On his death, which was also self-inflicted, it was said of Judas, He went to his own place (Acts 1:25), a statement made of no other person, and one that at least suggests that the Devil had made special provision to care for the disembodied soul of Judas until such time as he planned to make further use of him, as a false Christ and a false prophet in connection with the work of the Antichrist.

But in any event there is no man known to history whose character, spirit and deeds, and whose relation to Jesus Christ would make him the superior of Judas Iscariot for the rôle of the false prophet, who at the end of this age Satan will bring up out of the earth to play the part of the Jewish Messiah, and to head a system of blasphemous, deceitful, hypocritical, idolatrous religion, given over to the practice of covetousness and to the persecution of those who worship the only living and true God. It is, therefore, not beyond the realm of reasonable probability that the other beast who comes up out of the earth will be none other than Judas Iscariot.

Further, in the then apostate church of Christendom, the church of "that woman Jezebel" that the glorified Son of Man declared was the synagogue of Satan, the false prophet will find already established a system of deceitful and idolatrous religion, with a hierarchy fully trained to the practice of fraud, pretended miracles, covetousness, extortion and the persecution to the limit of its power of all those who oppose its tenets, that will exactly suit his satanic purpose, and into which system the two horns of this beast, the assumption of both ecclesiastical and civil power, will qualify him to fill the position of the Chief Pontiff.

Chapter XXIII

THE GENTILE WORLD EMPIRE

The Victors and the Vanquished

In the former vision, the chief characters, each of whom will have a part in deciding the world's destiny in connection with the times of the Gentiles, were presented by the Seer. And now in the next succeeding vision there is revealed unto him that the judgments, consisting of the seven last plagues that are about to be poured out upon the Gentiles, will be sent forth unto victory. And four victors, four being the number of the earth complete, are set forth: (1) The glorified Son of Man; (2) The True Church as taken out from among the Gentiles; (3) The Jewish martyrs of the great tribulation; (4) The innumerable multitude of the redeemed from all Gentile nations who are saved out of the tribulation.

On the other hand, the three organizations or systems, three being the number of a divine work or of the Trinity, that are completely overthrown and that perish from the earth as the result of the tribulation judgments are revealed, (1) The blasphemous and idolatrous religious system of the false prophet, or the other beast; (2) The wicked and oppressive commercial system of those having the mark of the Beast; and (3) The federated national organization that compose the empire of the Beast, or the Antichrist.

As they are presented in the vision Christ and His true Church appear as victors over against the apostate church and the commercial systems of the false prophet and the Antichrist. Next appear the Jewish martyrs and the redeemed of all nations who will come out of the great tribulation. These also are revealed as victors over against the overwhelming destruction that blots out of existence the empire of the Beast.

The Lamb on Mount Zion

> "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads" (ch. 14:1).

The earliest information found in Scripture concerning what later was known as Zion is that it was a city and the chief fortress of the Jebusites. It was at first called Jebusi or Jebus after the name of its occupiers. After Joab, who was one of king David's mighty men, had scaled the rocky side of the fortress and gained possession of the citadel the place was called the city of David and it is frequently in the Bible referred to by that name. By the Hebrews the city was also called Zion or Sion, meaning "a fortress" and it was the chief defense of the city of Jerusalem. It is supposed to have occupied the southwest hill of Jerusalem although the exact site has not been definitely determined. It was in this city that the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant of the Lord were located until after Solomon had completed the building of the temple in Jerusalem, and then both the tabernacle of the congregation and also the ark of the covenant of the Lord were transferred to the place which Solomon had provided for them (1 Kings 8:4).

But while Zion was ultimately incorporated with the city of Jerusalem, which was the capital of the nation, it never lost its identity. The psalms of king David had made the place memorable as the place that Jehovah had chosen and desired for His habitation, the place where He would dwell for ever (an age) (Ps. 132:13-18), and as the holy hill on which God would set His King, the Messiah (Ps. 2:6-12; Isa. 24:23). Hence the prophets mentioned this place rather than Jerusalem as the city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 60:14). It was also to Mount Zion that the Redeemer was to come, and from that place the light and glory of the Lord were to rise upon that nation at a time when darkness should cover the earth and gross darkness the people (Isa. 59:20; 60:1-3).

Here then in vision the Seer beheld a Lamb, the Jewish Messiah, or God's Anointed King, and He stood on Mount Zion signifying that He had taken possession of the Mount in

anticipation of the setting up of His Kingdom on the earth. Thus after the judgments were sent forth unto victory Jesus Christ is revealed as the mighty Conqueror and the chief Victor.

The Hundred Forty and Four Thousand With the Lamb

As in the case of the hundred forty and four thousand sealed ones out of all the twelve tribes of Israel, so here a definite number is employed to indicate an indefinite multitude. In each case the number used is the square of twelve which signifies completion. Both groups, therefore, are complete and no more or other persons are to be added to their number.

But the groups are entirely distinct and differ as follows: (1) The former group was selected out of the twelve tribes of Israel; (2) they have been sealed merely on their foreheads which signifies that they are known to God (2 Tim. 2:19); but (3) they remain on the earth as witnesses for Christ during the tribulation, and (4) they were sealed unto the day of their redemption (Eph. 4:30).

On the other hand, the group appearing in this vision evidently represents the True Church, the Bride of the Lamb. (1) They are those who were taken out for Christ's name from the Gentiles (Acts 15:14); (2) they have His Father's name written in their foreheads which signifies that they have been made partakers of the divine nature in fulfilment of one of the exceeding great and precious promises,—a promise which all the redeemed might realize provided they met the condition, namely: "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:4); (3) they, therefore, are not only known unto God, but they are already His redeemed ones, and (4) they are with the Lamb on Mount Zion.

The city of Jerusalem was built on four hills of which one was Mount Zion. There is also the Jerusalem that is above (Gal. 4:26), of which the earthly city is probably but the pattern even as the temple and practically all things connected therewith were only patterns of things in the heavens (Heb. 9:23). There is also a Mount Zion of the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22), but this is not to be understood as "the Zion that is above" on which the Lamb was seen standing with His redeemed. The context requires that this should be the earthly

Zion; for, as already explained, all things connected with this particular vision were on the earth, or associated with the earth. It would be difficult in this connection to see any significance attaching to Christ and His redeemed appearing on Mount Zion in heaven, but as already explained the fact that He stood on the earthly Mount Zion has a meaning plain and understandable because it signifies the formal taking possession of the same.

The Angel Choir and Song Without Words

> "And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (ch. 14:2, 3).

This was the angelic choir and the music both of the song and of the harps was so perfectly blended and harmonious that it seemed to come from but one voice; but it was a mighty voice as of many waters and as a great thunder. The words of the new song which was sung by this heavenly choir are not revealed, but the fact that no one on earth could learn that song other than the hundred and forty four thousand who were redeemed from the earth and who were with the Lamb is declared: They could learn it and thus both earth and heaven could unite in singing it.

And that song probably had some reference to the event of the Lamb standing with His redeemed on Mount Zion,—an event that fulfils the prophetic picture which describes the same place and event:

> "How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the sight of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa. 52:6-10).

On that occasion of joy and rejoicing, both on earth and in heaven, the redeemed with the Lamb on Mount Zion will have a part for they are the True Church, the Bride of the Lamb.

> "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (ch. 14:4, 5).

The fact is thus revealed that the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, has made herself ready, and the announcement will be heard in due time that the marriage of the Lamb has been consummated (Rev. 19:7-9).

The Last Gracious Warning and Invitation

> "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (ch. 14:6, 7).

This is a gracious warning of the coming judgment which immediately precedes the great tribulation. And as will appear later the judgment occurs during the first forty two months of the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles and is mercifully intended to teach the inhabitants of the world righteousness. On the other hand the tribulation occurs during the last forty two months of the same seven years, and its purpose is to punish justly all who continue impenitently to rebel against divine authority and to crush out all rebellion. Thus the Kingdom age will be brought in and the way will be prepared for the reign of the Prince of Peace. Preceding the judgment, therefore, a gracious invitation is given to those who have neglected all past opportunities to repent of their sins and to worship the only living and true God who alone can save them.

Thus before the bowls of wrath are poured out upon the

earth, and before the tribulation, which will end with the great and terrible day of the Lord begins, the ever (age) lasting gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, will continue to be proclaimed in the ears of earth dwellers, in spite of all that Antichrist and the false prophet and those who have received the mark of the Beast and who worship his image can do to prevent it.

And since conditions then on the earth are such that no human agency will avail to reach all that dwell on the earth, a heavenly messenger is sent forth to give a final miraculous warning of coming judgment, and a gracious invitation that should convince all men, if that were possible, that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Jesus is able to save unto the uttermost all who will come unto God by Him, and it is only because of those who will not come that there are any who shall perish.

The First Victim of the Judgment: Babylon in MYSTERY

> "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (ch. 14:8).

In later visions there are two Babylons described: the one, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH: the other, Babylon, the Capital city of the Antichrist, and the great commercial center of his beastly empire. MYSTERY BABYLON, with its system of idolatrous worship, will have its center in the city of Rome; Commercial Babylon, the Capital city of the Beast's empire, will be the ancient city of that same name which is to be rebuilt by the Antichrist (Isa. 23:13), who is, therefore, spoken of by the prophets as "The Assyrian" (Isa. 10:5, 24; 14:25; 30, 31; 31:8; Mic. 5:5, 6). Thus the times of the Gentiles will end where they began,—in Babylon.

Evidently it is the fall of MYSTERY BABYLON, the Mother of harlots, which made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, that the angel announces as the first victim that will be destroyed in the day of judgment,

or during the last seven years of Gentile world power. The proclamation, "Babylon *is fallen,*" is an example of the use of the prophetic present which so frequently occurs in prophecy, and that considers as already accomplished whatsoever Almighty God has purposed and promised to perform (Ps. 2:6; 1 John 5:15).

The Second Victim of the Judgment: Babylon, the Capital of the Beast's Empire

> "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for the ages of the ages: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (ch. 14:9-12).

This has reference to Commercial Babylon, and here due warning is given to the followers of Antichrist who have received his mark, or the condition which must be accepted either to buy or sell. As worshipers of the Beast and of his image they are allowed to get gain, but as a result they subject themselves to the wrath of God which shall be poured out without mixture. God will deal with them justly, but without any mercy to limit and restrain the exercise of justice. In connection with the visitation of judgments upon Israel, justice was tempered with divine mercy, but this shall not be when God deals with Gentiles, who for the love of gain have received the mark of the Beast.

Further, all such shall be tormented with fire and brimstone for the ages without having rest day or night. A twofold punishment is here declared to be awaiting these beastly marked merchants: (1) They will suffer the total loss of the coveted possessions in which they trusted when the great

commercial city is destroyed by divine judgments; and (2) They will lose their souls which they have bartered away in exchange for the material gains of earth. The torment "with fire and brimstone" is explained to signify "the second death" (Rev. 20:14; 21:8), or banishment from the presence of God to abide under His wrath.

Such will be the doom of the Beast worshipers and of those who deceive themselves with the thought that the Antichrist is too great and mighty ever to be overthrown. They have confidently asked, "Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?" And now they will suffer the curse of the man "that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer. 17:5). "The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness (Ps. 52:6, 7).

As there will be great multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles at that time who have learned righteousness from the divine judgments sent upon the earth, and who, therefore, refusing to accept the conditions, will be denied the privilege either to buy or sell, the suffering of such will be great and vast multitudes will probably die from starvation. Thus will be tried the patience of the saints. It will be a time of testing,—a time that will try men's souls. But there are those, an innumerable multitude, who will come off as conquerers, and of such it is said, Here are they that keep the commandments of God (the Israelites), and the faith of Jesus (the Gentiles who will be converted and come out of the great tribulation).

The Blessed Dead Who Die in the Lord from Henceforth

Thus far two victors, Christ and the True Church, and two victims of the day of judgment, the idolatrous system of worship encouraged by the false prophet, and the empire of the Beast, have appeared in the vision. Two more victors remain to be considered; and first the martyrs of that period:

> "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who died in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (ch. 14:13).

This is the second time in this connection that the Seer has received a revelation given to him directly by "a voice from heaven." The former revelation concerned the glorified redeemed who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," (vs. 2-5). Here, the revelation concerns the blessed dead. It is evidently intended to encourage all to resist even unto death the iniquitous demands of the Beast and of his image; also to comfort those who during that period of the world's history will be required to lay down their lives if they keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. "From henceforth," or from that time, all who die in the Lord are blessed. Several reasons are given in Scripture for the blessedness of those who die at that time in the Lord: (1) They are taken away from the evil to come (Isa. 57:1, 2); (2) They rest from their labor,—labor that will be most difficult to perform under the persecuting terrors of the Antichrist, and that would be not only unappreciated by many for whom the service was rendered but also apparently of no avail, and therefore useless. Nevertheless, while they live they must continue to labor as required to do by the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; (3) Their labor would not be in vain in the Lord because their works do follow them, or follow with them, and will serve as the basis of their reward of glory which at that time will not long be delayed; (4) Such will be confirmed in holiness and placed beyond the possibility of yielding to temptation: hence they shall not be hurt of the second death (Rev. 20:6); and (5) It is assured to all such that they shall reign with Christ.

The Harvest of the Earth

> "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (ch. 14:14-16).

The One seen sitting upon the cloud is the glorified Christ Who still dwells in the body prepared for Him and that makes Him appear like unto the son of man. The cloud also is His chariot upon which He rides gloriously and triumphantly. It is further a white cloud rather than one threatening of storms and judgments; hence it signifies that at that time, obedient to the voice of the angel out of the temple, Jesus is going forth, not on a mission of war, but rather on a mission of peace. True in His hand is a sharp sickle, but it is not to be forgotten that

> "Peace hath her victories,
> Not less renowned than war,"

and it is the victory of the gospel of the Prince of Peace that Jesus is about to gather. Who is more peaceful than the reaper in the harvest field even though he carries in his hand the sharp sickle? And to His disciples Jesus said:

> "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathered fruit unto eternal life: that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John 4:35, 36).

When those words were first spoken there were the white fields awaiting the reaper, and now at the end of the age judgments have been sent forth unto victory (Matt. 12:20), and again the fields are white to harvest, the divine Reaper is ready with His sharp sickle, and is seen riding forth to gather fruit unto eternal life. According to the word of the angel it was the time for Him rather than for any of His servants to reap; hence He thrust in His sickle and the earth was reaped.

And what a glorious harvest will then be gathered! Many of the redeemed of that period will be slain by the Antichrist and by his followers whose hatred of God's saints, the children of Israel, is among their chief characteristics. And in those days of persecution there will be many also among the Gentile nations who will count not their lives dear unto them, and who will swell the ranks of the martyrs of Jesus. And those gathered at that harvest will be nothing less nor other than the

great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues, which came out of the great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The Third Victim: the Empire of the Beast.

> "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire; and he cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe" (ch. 14:17, 18).

This harvest scene differs in every respect from the former. Here the reaper is an angel who is sent forth on his mission by another angel who came out from the altar and who had power over fire. The altar speaks to us of sin that requires the shedding of blood; the fire of the altar, which consumes the victim, is significant of the wrath of a holy God against sin; and it was the angel who came out from the altar, and who had power over fire, the angel who is Christ Himself,—He it was who cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.

Jesus declared that at the time of the harvest, which would be the end of the age, He would send forth His angels to gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity; and now at this very time that promise is fulfilled. Jesus presents Himself as the True Vine; and the prophet, in contrast with the True Vine, accused Judah of having turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine (John 15:1; Jer. 2:21). Also in the Song of Moses, we read of those who

> "forsook the God who made them, and lightly esteemed the Rock of salvation."

Of such as these it is declared:

> "Their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are the grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and

the cruel venom of asps. And they ask: Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?" To which question, God replies:

"To Me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste "(Deut. 32:32-43).

Here then the Seer beholds not the clusters of the True Vine as about to be gathered, but the clusters of the vine of the earth, the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah. Her grapes are fully ripe and the hour to reap has come.

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (ch. 14:19, 20).

Since one furlong equals five hundred and eighty two feet, there is here pictured a stream of blood more than one hundred and seventy-six miles in length, if the number of furlongs is literal. They are probably symbolic; one and its multiples represent the unity of the Godhead. Six and its multiples represent evil, Satan, the Antichrist. One before six, therefore, signifies the complete triumph of God over Satan. And since the multiple of the number One is ten times greater than that of the number six there is signified the magnitude of the victory that Christ will gain over Antichrist on the bloody fields of Armageddon. At that time the trenches will be filled with dead men and horses that belonged to the armies of Antichrist, and that will be slain when the Lord Almighty treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God in that great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Such will be the vintage at the end of the age:

"The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:40-43).

Chapter XXIV

THE JUDGMENT AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The Divine Agents of the Final Judgments

In the immediately preceding vision, having been given to understand what would be the results of the judgment and of the tribulation which God was about to visit upon the inhabitants of the earth, the Seer next beheld the agents through whom the earth was to be plagued.

> "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God" (ch. 15:1).

Attention has been called to the fact that, connected with the opening of the first four seals, the conduct and condition of the Gentile world were prophetically set forth for the entire period between the ascension of Christ and the end of the times of the Gentiles. It was also shown that connected with the opening of the last three seals there was revealed God's dealings with Israel and with the house of Jacob again under the Abrahamic Covenant. Further, it is understood that this period completed the last one of Daniel's Seventy of Sevens, or the last seven years required to complete the Abrahamic Covenant, and was also synchronous with the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles. At that time God's dealings with Israel will be by means of the merciful trumpet judgments,—seven in all.

It is believed, also, that immediately preceding these seven years the true Church will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, the Holy Spirit will be withdrawn, the visible Church will then become apostate, and on the stage of Gentile world history there will appear the Antichrist with

whom many of the Jews, the house of Jacob especially as the representatives of the nation, will make a league. This league will be broken after the first three and a half years by the Antichrist, who for the remaining three and a half years, or forty two months, will make war against Israel and besiege Jerusalem. All these things are plainly predicted in various Scriptures.

Further, in this prophecy of the Revelation, it is also revealed that at the beginning of this seven year period, or of the last seven years of this present evil age, the trumpet judgments that will be visited upon Israel will be shared also by all earth dwellers both Jews and Gentiles, and the purpose of these judgments for the first forty two months is that the inhabitants of the world may learn righteousness. The damage wrought by these judgments is limited to a third part so far as it affects the Israelites, or the true Israel of God, while all other inhabiters of the world, who are also citizens of the empire of the Beast, will suffer double as much as the seed of Abraham, or two thirds of the damage. This fact is revealed in connection with the destruction of Commercial Babylon, the Capital of the Beast's empire. Thus the bowls of wrath that are to be poured out will be visited exclusively upon such as belong to the empire of the Beast, and as these bowl judgments synchronize with those of the trumpets, the Capital city which represents all belonging to the empire of the Beast has "doubled unto her double according to her works; and the cup (of wrath) which she hath filled is filled to her double" (Rev. 18:6).

One further word of explanation: The first four, both of the trumpets and also of the bowls of wrath, constitute "The judgment," or "My" or "Thy judgment," or "the judgment of the wicked," or "of the transgressor," to which there is frequent reference in the Scriptures. These judgments are sent on the earth during the first three and a half of the last seven years of this age; while the judgments under the remaining three trumpets and bowls of wrath, which follow without any delay, are experienced during the last three and a half years, or forty two months, and they constitute the great tribulation which closes with the day of the Lord. Upon the Gentiles,

therefore, or the empire of the Beast, the judgments begin immediately after the opening of the fifth seal, and so there is seen the seven angels having the seven last plagues, and in each case seven represents the dispensational fulness and completion of the divine judgments.

God Glorified and Worshiped Because of His Judgments

> "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the Beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (ch. 15: 2-4).

These victors have all come out of the great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire which signifies that they fully share the righteous wrath and holy indignation of God that is about to be poured out. In the voice of song they testify to God's great and marvelous works, to His just and true ways; they wonder that any man should fail to fear and to glorify God's name, and in view of His holiness and judgments they predict that all nations shall come and worship Him.

Many there are today who refuse to believe the testimony of the gospel to the very truth proclaimed in these songs; but when God's judgments are made manifest in the earth, then they will believe and unite also with others of the redeemed in giving their witness to these same things, and they too will magnify God for His judgments.

The Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in Heaven

> "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the

> seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, Who liveth for the ages of the ages" (ch. 15:5-7).

The testimony given by God to Israel was the Ten Commandments written with the finger of God on the two tables of stone (Ex. 31:18). This testimony was put in the ark upon which was the mercy seat (Ex. 25:16, 21), and kept in the Most Holy place which was also called the tabernacle of the testimony (Num. 1:50; 10:11). Over this the Levites were appointed and no stranger was allowed to draw near under penalty of death. Remembering that these things were only the pattern of things in the heavens it is necessary to understand that what the Seer beheld was the tabernacle or ark of the testimony (God's commandments, or the Moral Law), in the Most Holy place in the heavenly temple. The veil no longer separated between the temple and the Holy place where the tabernacle was kept; for all had been opened when the Lamb of God died on the Cross of Calvary.

And out of this temple in heaven came the angels with the last plagues. Their garments were like those worn by Aaron and his sons who ministered in the temple (Ex. 39:27). However, the girdle worn by Aaron was of linen (Ex. 39:29), while these angels wore the golden girdles over the breast as did also the glorified Son of Man (Rev. 1:13). This signifies that they were representatives of the Royal Priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), and of those who had been redeemed from among men. They belonged, therefore, to the King, and having received from one of the four living creatures the bowls of the wrath of God which they were to pour out upon the earth it is evident that the redeemed will have a part to take in connection with these judgments:

> "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishment upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment

written: *this honor have all the saints. Praise ye the Lord"* (Ps. 149:5-9).

The vision of the Seer continues:

> "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled" (ch. 15:8).

From this we must understand that the day of intercession on behalf of earth dwellers had past; their cup of iniquity will at that time be full to the very brim, and no power can stay the arm of justice until after the seven bowls of the wrath of God have been poured out (Jer. 15:1).

Divine Judgments Abroad in the Earth

> "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his bowl upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the Beast, and upon them which worshiped his image" (ch. 16:1, 2).

This affliction sent upon the idolaters who had the mark of the Beast was probably similar to that of Job when he was covered from head to foot with boils or carbuncles (Job 2:7, 8), and it was like the sixth of the Egyptian plagues (Ex. 9:8-11). Keep in mind that these bowl judgments will occur simultaneously with the trumpet judgments visited upon both Israel and the Gentiles, while only the citizens of the Beast's empire will suffer from the bowl judgments. Thus there will be filled up unto them double.

> "And the second angel poured out his bowl upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea" (ch. 16:3).

Under the trumpets this judgment caused only the third part of the sea to become blood, while the empire of the Beast suffers the double, or two thirds. Thus the one third plus the two thirds completes the judgment and so the whole sea,

and not merely the third part, became as the blood of a dead man; also every living soul, rather than the third part, died in the sea. The picture here presented is evidently symbolic and describes merely the completeness of the judgment, or in other words it sets forth that the judgment accomplished all that God intended by it, and left nothing undone, to be finished at a later time, that God had purposed to perform.

> "And the third angel poured out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood" (ch. 16:4).

Again, this is the same as the third trumpet judgment, except as to its extent, and for this exception the explanation is the same as that given above. However, these first three bowl judgments are separated from those that follow by the testimony of the angel of the waters. Thus they make a group of three judgments to emphasize that they are sent on the earth as a divine work, and their purpose is such that God is to be praised:

> "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, Who art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast thus judged. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another (angel or voice) out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments" (ch. 16:5-7).

Divine justice calls for an exact equivalent: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Here those who delighted in shedding blood will be compelled to drink blood as the blood of a dead man in order to quench their thirst. Verily such judgments are true and righteous,

> "And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and power was given unto him (the angel) to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, Who hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory" (ch. 16:8, 9).

In the fourth trumpet judgment, the third part of the sun, moon and stars was darkened, and for the third part of the day and night there was no light from either luminary. This also was experienced by the Gentiles, who under this fourth bowl judgment were further afflicted since they were scorched with fire. This probably will result from great conflagrations in different parts of the earth that will burn down buildings and lay waste whole cities and villages. Though these terrible judgments will not bring all men to repentance, yet they result in bringing the only living and true God to the mind of those who had forgotten Him, or who had denied even His existence. Now even though they blasphemed they recognized nevertheless the hand of Him Who had power over these plagues.

Four completes the earth number; and with the pouring out of the fourth bowl the judgments which were graciously designed to bring men to repentance will come to an end. Still there will remain those who repent not to give God the glory, and they will seal, therefore, their own doom. These first four bowls of wrath will bring afflictions upon men as individuals rather than as organized, or as representing the national organization. Beginning, however, with the pouring out of the fifth bowl of wrath the judgment falls upon the kingdom of the Beast. Then under the sixth bowl judgment, the armies of the Beast are being gathered together on the field of Armageddon to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And when the seventh bowl is poured out the Capital of the Beast's empire, Great Babylon, is destroyed.

With the pouring out of the fifth bowl, therefore, it is believed that the great tribulation will begin, and then will be fulfilled Daniel's prophecy as it predicts the smiting of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar, or the empire of the Beast, in the days when the ten toes, which are explained to represent ten kings, make their appearance (Dan. 2:44, 45).

The Great Tribulation

> "And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the seat (throne) of the Beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and

their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (ch. 16:10, 11).

Taken by itself this judgment suggests no explanation whatever for the pain suffered by those in the Beast's empire that caused them to gnaw their very tongues. It corresponds to the ninth of the Egyptian plagues when for three days there was thick darkness over all the land of Egypt. This caused much inconvenience for during that time the Egyptians saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days (Ex. 10:22, 23). But there is not even a hint of physical pain and suffering.

However, when side by side with this fifth judgment there is placed the fifth trumpet judgment then the explanation is found at once. At that very time, the demon-possessed locusts were abroad in the earth whose torment was as the torment of a scorpion when it striketh a man. As a result, in those days, the men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads shall desire to die, and shall seek death which will flee from them. Here then is the explanation for the terrible pain and for the physical torture that caused men to gnaw their tongues and to blaspheme the God of heaven. At that very time those in the kingdom of the Beast will be having their experience with the locusts and the darkness,—the overwhelming darkness in the kingdom of the Beast, is only an additional experience that will fill their cup to the double.

Had it been possible for the Seer to record that those who suffered these judgments repented of their sins, and also confessed and forsook them, then the last chapter of Gentile world empire would have had a very different ending from what is recorded in the prophecy of this book; for

"The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jas. 5:11). "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. 3:32, 33). But, on the other hand:

"He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29:1).

These subjects of the empire of the Beast will not repent of their deeds; rather they will blaspheme God and doom themselves to utter destruction that will fall upon them in the great day of God's wrath.

> "And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" (ch. 16:12).

Here again is the account of further judgments set off by themselves in a group of three to indicate a divine work. In the first group of three, the judgments came from natural causes; men were afflicted and suffered because of disease, or because of the pollution of the waters. In the second group of three, the judgments were all of a supernatural character; men were scorched with great heat, the kingdom of the Beast was full of darkness, and the water of the great river Euphrates was dried up to prepare the way of the kings of the east. These kings with their armies were the same peoples probably that were marshalled for war as recorded under the sixth trumpet judgment. God's judgment had dried up the river; and as of old when the Israelites were permitted to march through the Red Sea on dry land so the way of these kings was prepared.

A parenthetical vision is then recorded which relates an experience of these kings after they had been induced by the four angels (ch. 9:13-15), to take the way, evidently at the head of their armies, to go forth to battle:

> "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of demons, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (ch. 6:13, 14).

The sources from which these unclean spirits come, namely, out of the mouth of the dragon, of the Beast and of the false prophet, make their character as unclean doubly evident. They were the spirit of demons, and their mission was to gather

the kings of earth to fight against God. Among all the demons the three most likely to be selected to accomplish that mission will be the spirits of lying, lawlessness and covetousness. The dragon was a liar from the beginning, and the spirit out of his mouth, or sent forth at his command, will be most certainly a lying spirit. The Beast, or Antichrist, is described as "the lawless one," and the spirit out of his mouth will naturally be a lawless spirit. Then also like Balaam, every false prophet loves the wages of unrighteousness; he is covetous of reward which becomes his idol, and hence covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). We would conclude, therefore, that at the command of the false prophet there will go forth a covetous spirit.

This trinity of frog-like demons, working miracles, will go forth, embodied in men, as ambassadors of the Antichrist, on their appointed mission at Satan's instigation, but with God's permission, and they will succeed.

> "God shall send the nations a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thes. 2:11, 12).

Hence the armies of the nations will be gathered to Armageddon, and on that battlefield the glorified Son of Man will face the Beast and his armies set in battle formation against Him Who is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Concerning the outcome Jesus is not at all apprehensive, and He Himself gives the warning:

> "Behold, I come as a thief (suddenly, unexpectedly), Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And He (Christ) gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue ARMAGEDDON" (ch. 16:15, 16).

Armageddon means the mount of slaughter and the place is believed by many authorities to be identical with Megiddo which means the place of troops. It is part of the hill country which came into possession of Manasseh when the land was divided among the twelve tribes (Josh. 17:11). To this

place the unclean spirits are said to have gathered the kings of the whole world to battle (v. 14), while v. 16 declares that Christ gathered the nations for this same battle. This is merely another example of God accepting responsibility for evil that He could have prevented, but instead He permitted it to be accomplished as a means to the carrying out of His own plans. It was thus God hardened the heart of Pharaoh by leaving that proud monarch free and unhindered to harden his own heart. In each case the result was accomplished only because of the divine permission without which the devil's plans could never succeed; and God never fails to accept responsibility for all that He permits. The trinity of frog-like demons deceived the nations, therefore, because God permitted them to succeed in their evil doings, it is said also that God gathered the nations to Armageddon; for it was His revealed purpose to slay them there and thus make possible the setting up of His Kingdom on the earth.

The Final Judgments of the Great Tribulation

When the seventh seal was opened, signifying the end of the dispensation, it is merely said, "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." When the seventh trumpet was sounded the great voices in heaven proclaimed, The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Anointed One, the True Church . . . and then added: There were lightnings, thunderings, an earthquake and great hail. Now there is only left to consider the remaining one of the seven bowls of divine wrath which followed the opening of the seventh seal, and which occurred simultaneously with the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

The first group of three bowl judgments shows the results accomplished by means of natural agencies that God employed to fulfil the good pleasure of His will, namely, the desire that men should learn righteousness. The second group of three bowl judgments shows the results accomplished by means of supernatural agencies to enforce, if possible, submission to God's holy and righteous will upon even the hardened and impenitent who otherwise would be destroyed, and that without remedy.

The last bowl of divine wrath is now to be outpoured; it contains the final judgments of the great tribulation, and immediately after these judgments Christ will return and the Kingdom Age will begin. Behind this last one bowl judgment, one being the number of the Trinity in unity, there is the power of the godhead working in unison, and the final result will be accomplished by means both of natural and of supernatural agencies.

> "And the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, it is done" (ch. 16:17).

The other bowls will be poured out upon the land and the waters; this bowl is poured out into the air. Thus all the elements that have been polluted because of their contact with sin are to be purified with the fires of divine judgments.

> "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great" (ch. 16:18).

Referring to this very time and occasion the prophet declared concerning Ariel a name that means "the lion of God":

> "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt (Mount Zion)! Add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices (as the nation of Israel will again do when they return to their own land in their unbelief). Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow; and it shall be unto Me as Ariel. . . . Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night. It shall even be as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite; so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against Zion" (Isa. 29:1-8).

Of the physical results of that great earthquake it is declared by another prophet:

> "The mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: *and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee*" (Zech. 14:4, 5).

To this same event the Seer refers, and he declares:

> "And the great city (Jerusalem) was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (ch. 16:19, 20).

Thirty days after the earthquake, as will be shown later, there followed a supernatural hail storm:

> "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great" (ch. 16:21).

The effect of this storm was that men merely hardened their hearts as did the Egyptians when they experienced a like judgment, the seventh that was sent upon that nation (Ex. 9:18-20). It will be noted that many of these last plagues that fill up the wrath of God were the same as those visited upon the land of Egypt when Israel was finally delivered from the bondage of Pharaoh (Ex. 7:14). In that day the hail was mingled with fire (lightning) and smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, and break every tree (Ex. 9:25). The result will probably be the same and even more extensive and terrible at the end of the tribulation.

It is not at all improbable that there was reference to this very hail storm to be sent upon the earth on this occasion when out of the whirlwind Jehovah asked the holy man of Uz:

> "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war" (Job 38:22, 23)?

These terrible plagues will only demonstrate that those who then will be dwellers on the earth as the willing subjects of the Antichrist will be incorrigible and wilful sinners. Hence, not even divine judgments can turn them from their evil ways. They will not repent of their deeds, but rather they blasphemed because of the suffering which their own wickedness had brought upon themselves, and thus they doom themselves to utter destruction.

All the plagues represented by the seven bowls of the wrath of God are understood to occur during the last seven years of this present evil age, and the last three of these bowl judgments will, therefore, probably occur during the latter half of these years. They seem to begin at the time mentioned by Daniel as the "midst of the week," and so they will continue during the forty-two months of the tribulation that will be visited directly upon the empire of the Beast. Thus the great image of Gentile world power, as seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream that Daniel interpreted, will be smitten and become as chaff of the summer threshingfloors which the wind (judgment) carried away. The way will then be prepared for the return of Christ in His glory, to sit upon the throne of His glory, and for the setting up of God's Kingdom here on the earth.

Chapter XXV

THE OVERTHROW OF MYSTERY, BABYLON

The Woman on a Scarlet Colored Beast

> "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven bowls, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (ch. 17:1-3).

In the Scripture both apostacy from God and also the practice by heathen nations of false and idolatrous systems of religion are mentioned constantly as spiritual unchastity. Apostacy from the true God is described as adultery (Eze. 23:4, 5, 30, 37-43; Jer. 9:1, 2; Hos. 3:1-5), while the worship of false gods by heathen is specially spoken of as fornication or harlotry, as for example Tyre (Isa. 23:15-17) and Nineveh (Nah. 3:4; 2 Kings 9:22). But those guilty of either are charged with whoredom and represented as a lewd woman.

The unchaste woman whose judgment the Seer beholds and records in this vision is not presented as an adultress, but rather she is charged with fornication. Hence it cannot be apostate Christianity that is here represented, but rather it is some system of utterly false and idolatrous religion such as was instituted by "that woman Jezebel" within the Visible Church, and which caused the death of that institution as a Church of God so that it became "the synagogue of Satan."

As the many waters upon which this woman sat are explained (v. 15) to be peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues, it is evident that the false religious system represented by

this lewd woman is widely diffused; it is no mere national affair, but rather it is international, and all these nations are in absolute subjection to this system of false religion; for the great whore sitteth upon them; thus keeping them down and holding them in subjection to her will and authority.

One of the seven angels, having the last bowls of wrath, proposed to show John the judgment that would overtake this woman. The Seer, therefore, was carried away, not bodily, but in the spirit into the wilderness, figurative of a place of absolute spiritual barrenness and wholly destitute of every thing good and worth while, and there he saw this woman on a scarlet colored beast. This was the same ten horned beast that Daniel saw in the latter end of Gentile world domination, after the ten toes on the image of Nebuchadnezzar had become ten kings. It is also the same beast that John saw rise up out of the sea to become the empire of the Antichrist. The ear marks are too well defined to mistake the identity of this beast which certainly does not represent the pagan Roman empire in the days of the Seer. Rather, it represents the beastly empire of the Antichrist which has not yet appeared on the stage of the world history, and which will be the last form of Gentile world power to be on this earth before the end of this present age. The woman who held all peoples subject to her domination sat also upon the Beast, indicating her control of the civil government.

> "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints (Jews), and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Christians); and when I saw her I wondered with great wonder" (ch. 17:4-6).

The purple is the royal color of Messiah (Mk. 15:20), which the woman had assumed. The garments of purple and scarlet, and the expensive and beautiful jewels and ornaments suggest not only a person of great dignity and of high

rank, but also and especially a royal personage of Jewish lineage who should be a worthy example to her subjects of all that was good, just and beautiful in character and conduct. But while the woman's dress and adornments indicated Jewish royalty, nevertheless the cup of abominations in her hand and the inscription on her headdress associated her with the Gentile world; and further, she was drunken with the blood of both Jews and Christians whom she had persecuted unto the death.

Here indeed was mystery: This woman who posed as the representative both of the true Israel of God, and also of the Gentile world, which at that time will have its Capital at Babylon; who was arrayed as a beautiful queen, but at the same time shamelessly advertised herself as a harlot, and who had persecuted all worshipers of the true God until she appeared drunken with their blood. Evidently this woman represents an impostor, a deceiver, the head of a false and idolatrous worship, and she exercised great power and authority for she presumes to sit even upon the Beast after the same fashion as she was seen to sit on all her subjects. Who was this woman? The Seer had no explanation and seeing her he greatly wondered.

The Mystery of the Beast Explained by the Angel

> "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (ch. 17:7, 8).

As has been already revealed, the number of the Beast, *666* or *616*, was the number of a man, the Antichrist, who formerly lived on the earth for once he "WAS." But when the revelation was given to John that beastly man was dead for "HE IS NOT." However, he "YET IS"; he is to be restored to life, and he will again bear rule over men on this earth; hence he shall ASCEND OUT OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT where,

as a lost soul, he is today and was at the time John received the revelation. But his doom is fixed and irrevocable, and so after being the world emperor for a few brief years he must go into perdition. Such is the Beast who will be the head of the beastly empire that carries the woman, or that supports and yet submits to her domination. Well may the unregenerate earth dwellers wonder when, in due time, they behold the Beast that was, and is not, and yet IS.

The Mystery of the Seven Heads Explained by the Angel

> "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings (kingdoms): five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come: and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (ch. 17:9-11).

In Scripture the word "mountain" is used both in a literal and in a symbolic sense. When it is said, The mountains are round about Jerusalem (Ps. 125:2), a literal meaning attaches to the word. But when the prophet declares, The Stone that smote the image (seen in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar) became a great mountain and filled the whole earth; and again when he says, The Stone was cut out of the mountain without hands (Dan. 2:35, 45), it is evident that the word "mountain" is employed as a symbol or figure of organized human government, or of an earthly kingdom. Other prophets also have used the word thus symbolically (Isa. 2:2).

The Seer has used the word in this Scripture with a double meaning to indicate (1) where the woman is located; and that will be a place of seven literal mountains; and then to signify (2) what will constitute the empire of the Beast: that empire is to consist of seven symbolic mountains, or the heads, or kings, of seven different kingdoms. Of the seven kings, or kingdoms, all of which will be included in the Beast's empire it is revealed that at that time, or in the days of the Seer, five are fallen, one is and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space. The five fallen kingdoms probably refer to the empires of Egypt, Assyria,

Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Greece. The one surviving kingdom in the days of the Seer was pagan Rome, which like Babylonia took its name from its Capital city. The other kingdom which had not yet come refers most likely to the Eastern Roman empire, having for its Capital Constantinople. The Beast, therefore, who was, and is not, and yet is, who will organize even the eighth and last beastly world empire, and who is of the seven, and who goeth into perdition, will be the former emperor of Rome, even the monster, Nero, as already explained.

The Mystery of the Ten Horns Explained by the Angel

> "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the Beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (ch. 17: 12-14).

It ought to be clear to thoughtful readers that the ten horns here described are entirely different horns, or rulers, from those mentioned both in the prophecy of Daniel (7:7, 8), and also in the earlier part of this prophecy of the Revelation (13: 1, 2). Those ten horns *had* received their kingdoms. Three of them were overcome and torn up by the roots; thus seven heads only remained to form the empire of the Antichrist. And these seven remaining horns, subject to the Beast, the emperor, continued as heads of their respective kingdoms and reigned with the Beast while his empire lasted. But here are ten horns, or kings, with no kingdoms as yet, who receive power with the Beast as kings only for one hour. These ten horns, therefore, are not included in the empire of the Beast, although for a very brief period of time, one hour, they become associated with him to make war with the Lamb. For this purpose they are of one mind and they give their power and strength unto the Beast. Hence they will be part of the army of the Beast gathered at the place called Armageddon, and there the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and

King of kings. The called, chosen and faithful who are on His side, and with Him, and who shall share with Him the victory over the armies of Antichrist, and the one hundred and forty four thousand having His Father's name written in their foreheads and who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These constitute the True Church, the Bride of Christ, or His Anointed One. They are the called, the chosen, the faithful.

The Kings from the Sun Rising, or the East

But who are the ten kings? The Seer furnishes the answer in what the angel further revealed unto him:

> "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (ch. 17:15-17).

The ten horns are here associated with the peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues of which none is shown to have risen to the dignity of a kingdom. They are a great horde of people, a motley multitude, belonging to small nations and tribes over which the ten horns are petty rulers or satraps. These multitudes have suffered a long time from the oppression and arrogance of the woman who is shown as sitting on them (v. 1); hence they hate the whore; they have resolved to make her desolate, to eat her flesh, and to burn her with fire. By so doing they will fulfil God's will as they further do when they agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

Now it is possible to understand what was any thing other than clear in the revelation connected with the sixth trumpet (ch. 9:13-21), and the sixth bowl of wrath (ch. 16:12-16). Under the sixth trumpet there is an account of a great army of horsemen from the region of the Euphrates river who were marshalled for war, after the four angels were loosed which

were prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year. This army was to accomplish the purpose of that judgment, namely, to slay the third part of men. In connection with that revelation no hint is given as to the cause of the strife; and aside from the fact that the armies of the Antichrist were probably engaged in battling with these horsemen, for no other forces would be at all able to cope with them, nothing is recorded regarding the result of the conflict other than that the third part of men was slain. And not a word is said as to how peace was finally restored.

However, in Daniel's prophecy (11:36-45), it is revealed that at the time of the end, the Antichrist will have war with many countries in the midst of which *"tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him*: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him." Once more, after the sixth bowl judgment had dried up the water of the Euphrates that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared, there follows immediately the account of the three unclean, frog-like spirits that were sent out by the dragon, the Beast, and the false prophet to interview these kings of the East, or from the sun rising, and to persuade them, by means of pretended miracles, and by lying promises of reward to appeal to their covetousness, to join forces with the armies of the Antichrist in the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

Putting these several parts of the revelation together affords a very complete picture of a prophecy that will probably be fufilled in the latter days. Here are the facts suggested at least by the picture that results from the combined revelations: (1) These multitudes of eastern peoples and their rulers will be wronged, degraded and oppressed by the Harlot who represents a false system of religion and whom these multitudes at last came to hate, and finally purposed to destroy her. Hence they united to make war against her. (2) The uprising of so great a mass of people and their determination to overthrow one of the favored institutions of his empire were the tiding from the East that troubled the Antichrist, and that

caused him to go forth with great fury to stop the invasion and to destroy the enemy. (3) While a portion of the army of the kings of the East engaged the Beast and his army in battle near Jerusalem, and thus brought suffering and death to many of the inhabitants of that city (Rev. 6:13-21), another division of the army of the Eastern kings marched direct for the accomplishment of the chief purpose of the war, and succeeded in utterly destroying this woman, and in burning her with fire (Rev. 17:16). Here were the tidings out of the North that added to the discomfiture of the Antichrist. (4) Learning of this defeat, the Antichrist, instead of further prosecuting the war, sent forth the three unclean, frog-like spirits as his ambassadors, to treat with these kings of the East, to persuade them to agree to a truce; and further, to induce them to make a league with him for the destruction of Jerusalem. (5) With lies, cunning craftiness and promises of rich reward made to these kings, the unclean spirits succeeded in gathering them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty (Rev. 16:12-14); for God had put it into their hearts to agree, and give their kingdom unto the Beast (Rev. 17:17). (6) Thus for one hour, or a very brief period of time, they receive power with the Beast who thus appears in the vision with these ten horns, or kings. This at least is a reasonable understanding of these several prophecies that probably all refer to the same occasion, and that apparently will be fulfilled at the same time, although but a partial view is given of the complete event in any one of the prophecies.

The Mystery of the Woman Explained by the Angel

> "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (ch. 17:18).

It is very evident, therefore, that the Scarlet woman is used as a symbol for a certain city. It is not only a city which, like the Capital of the Beast empire, reigneth over the kings of the earth, but also it is a city that is the personification of a great system of false, blasphemous, deceitful and idolatrous religion such as is characterized by the woman who is the MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF

THE EARTH. The city must represent a religious system with hypocritical claims and pretensions to royal dignity and authority so that the leading representatives of that morally rotten and satanic system of idolatry, as far as in their power lieth, put all peoples of every degree of rank, and also all civil governments, those of the greatest and mightiest empires not less than those of smaller and uninfluential nations, under their feet. It must be a system of religion which by means of lies, deceptions and pretended power to work miracles keeps all alike in subjection to a tyrannical and arbitrary will, and oppresses its devotees even as the symbolic woman is revealed as sitting upon peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues, and also upon the Beast himself who will be the supreme head of the greatest Gentile empire that ever will be organized on this earth. The great city which this woman symbolizes must reign over the kings of the earth in this manner in order to fill out the conditions described in this vision.

There never was but one such city, and it still exists and proudly boasts of being the eternal city. That city is papal Rome, which since the time of that woman Jezebel, and the development of the papal hierarchy, has been the personification of all that is symbolically represented by the Scarlet woman of this prophecy. Rome is also the only city known to history that is built upon seven hills and which thus satisfies a further condition of this prophecy (v. 9), and that city today, as the representative of the greatest antichristian system of idolatrous worship and of deceitful practices that has ever cursed the earth, has for its motto *"Semper eadem,"* meaning "Always the same." Like a piece of gum elastic, its policy can be stretched out and made to appear very broad and tolerant; for "the end justifies the means"; or on the instant it can contract to its natural condition and reveal the narrow and intolerant spirit that holds "ignorance to be the mother of devotion," and that is ever ready to persecute to the limit of its power all who fail to yield full submission to its tyranny.

The origin of the papacy is not to be traced to God or to the Word of God, but rather to that woman Jezebel who calleth herself a prophetess, and who taught and seduced God's servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto

idols (ch. 2:20). True, the system of religion known as the Papal hierarchy, at the head of which is the Pope of Rome, sprang up within the True Church; and usurping the prerogatives of Christ, that blasphemous system of idolatry soon put forth the claim of being the only true Church of God on earth. Further, under the pretense of being the vice-regent of Christ, the head of that system of abominations wears the royal purple, and assumes to reign over the kings of the earth as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. His cardinals, who are mere civil rather than ecclesiastical functionaries, are clothed in scarlet, and that false religious system has aided, encouraged and abetted the persecution and slaughter of God's people Israel, and also of true Christians whenever and wherever the opportunity offered. Of that iniquitous system, therefore, it may truly be said that it is drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus.

Besides, according to credible history, that church, or system of pagan idolatry, has well earned the title of the Scarlet woman, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Even today the papacy answers to the description of that other beast out of the earth having the two lamb-like horns which represents both ecclesiastical and civil power and which speaks like a dragon. And in due time this beast will exercise all the power of the first beast, the Antichrist, and eventually will even sit on him. But her pretensions and conduct will only hasten the destruction of the city of Rome which is the personification of the Babylon of Mystery even as the Seer records.

Papal Rome, with its system of idolatrous worship and blasphemous pretensions, will be a choice institution in the empire of the Beast. And, in the days of the Antichrist, with the false prophet, or the other beast, who probably will be Judas Iscariot the greedy covetous thief who cared not for the poor (John 12:6), at the head of that system, it will not be surprising if the multitudes of long oppressed and degraded masses of earth's peoples that have been trodden under the heel of such despotism, tyranny and greed, should hate the whore of this prophecy, make her desolate and naked, and burn her with fire.

Such then will be the doom of that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth. And the instrumentality which shortly before the end of this age God will employ to fulfil His will in the total destruction of this beastly city, papal Rome, and the whole idolatrous system which it personifies, will be the forces of the evil one. Thus will be fulfilled the prediction concerning the children of that woman Jezebel, the unmarried (Rev. 2:22, 23), and God will bring about the result "by the wicked which is His (Thy) sword," (Ps. 17:13).

Chapter XXVI

THE DOOM OF BABYLON THE GREAT

Babylon the Great is Destroyed Never to be Rebuilt Again

> "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (ch. 18:1-3).

Since, as already revealed, the city of Rome, or Mystery Babylon, will be destroyed by the ten kings who later are induced to become associated with the Beast, it seems certain that Rome will not be the Capital city of the Antichrist. The Beast might have been compelled to surrender to the kings had they overthrown the seat of his government and of his empire, but in that case as victors they would not have consented to join in a league in which they would hold a position subordinate to the one they had conquered. Yet if this prophecy is correctly interpreted that was the very nature of the league into which these victorious kings from the East, or from the sun rising, had been persuaded to enter by the three unclean, frog-like spirits who served as ambassadors for the dragon, the Beast, and the false prophet.

However, expositors of this Book of the Revelation who believe that Rome will be the Capital of the Beast's empire, claim also that MYSTERY BABYLON and Babylon the great are one and the same city. They endeavor to make a distinction between ecclesiastical Babylon and political Babylon

both of which they explain to be the city of Rome. They claim also that it is only ecclesiastical Babylon, or the Scarlet woman, and not political Babylon, or the Capital of the last Gentile world power, that was destroyed by the ten kings who later associated themselves with the Beast. Thus while MYSTERY BABYLON was destroyed there still remained Babylon, the commercial city of wealth and luxury, the fall of which is later announced by the mighty angel.

It is true that Rome papal represents a religio-political system and that she has ever been more interested in the latter than in the former part of the system. In fact she propagates and prostitutes her religion chiefly in the interest of her politics. But it is difficult to understand how one part of that system can be utterly destroyed and burned with fire and the other part remain even though it be only for a short time.

The chief reason why such expositors attempt to maintain this distinction is their belief in Old Testament prophecy that predicts concerning the literal Babylon, the glory of kingdoms and the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, that it shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there (Isa. 13:20; Jer. 50:3, 39; 51:29, 62).

If it could be demonstrated that such prophecies refer exclusively to the ancient city of Babylon that already has lain desolate for so many generations, then the sincere believer in the Bible as the Word of God could not possibly entertain the suggestion that that city would be ever again rebuilt. But a closer examination of these prophecies appears at least to reveal that Isaiah had in view two destructions of that city. Referring to the destruction of Babylon (1) by the Medes he declared that the result would be "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." And then, ignoring the time during which God's Covenant with Israel was suspended, he predicts a second destruction of that city which would occur (2) in the latter days when God was once again dealing with Israel. And it is only as then destroyed for the second time that he declares concerning that city: "It shall never (lo la-netsach, literally, 'not to perpetuity') be inhabited," etc. (Isa. 13:20).

Thus understood, Isaiah's prophecy will harmonize with that of the prophet Jeremiah who certainly predicted two destructions of that city. The first declares the destruction and utter desolation of that city by the Medes, and then it was to remain a ruin for an age (Heb. Olam) (Jer. 50:3; 51:26, 62); the second predicts the destruction and perpetual (lo la-netsach) desolation of that city (Jer. 50:39). Further, after Jeremiah has finished his prediction concerning the first destruction of Babylon he was directed to add this additional very significant revelation:

> "And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a STONE to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah" (Jer. 51:63, 64).

The prediction, therefore, concerning the first destruction of that city by the Medes, which has resulted in the city remaining a desolation for an age, has now been literally fulfilled. The prediction concerning the second destruction of that city by the STONE, which will result in the perpetual ruin of Babylon which shall never again be inhabited, not only permits, but necessitates the rebuilding of that ancient city which has now for generations, since its overthrow by the Medes, been desolate and without inhabitant.

This explanation clears away also the difficulty that is found in the Book of Revelation if it is to be understood that both Mystery Babylon, and also Babylon the great refer to the city of Rome. For here it is revealed that Rome, Mystery Babylon, will be destroyed by the ten kings from the East before the end of this age (Rev. 17:15-17), while Babylon the great, the Capital city of the Beast's empire, will be overthrown only at the very end of the age, and then it will be destroyed by the great earthquake to be sent upon the earth by the Stone, cut out without hand, at the time of the final smiting and complete ruin of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar, symbolic of the empire of the Beast, or of the Antichrist (Rev. 16:18, 19).

Further, the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy absolutely necessitates the rebuilding of the ancient city of Babylon which was destroyed by the Medes about 538 B.C. To the prophet Zechariah (5:5-11), whose work was with the remnant that had returned to Jerusalem after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon had ended, there were given several visions concerning events that were related to the end time of Gentile world power. In one of these visions his attention was called to an ephah that was seen going forth on some mission. It was explained to the prophet that this particular ephah was just such a one as was commonly used throughout the earth by merchants whenever they bought or sold any thing requiring to be measured out; hence it would be large enough to contain a bushel and three pints. There appeared also a talent of lead which like gold, silver, iron and tin, was commonly used as a medium of exchange among merchants (Ex. 27:12). And there was a woman who was declared to represent wickedness (Prov. 11:1-31; 20 1-23), and her place was seen to be in the midst of the ephah.

Thus this vision pointed to barter and trade, not of an ordinary and legitimate character, but rather the teaching of the vision presents unmistakably a symbolic picture of a commercial spirit that is deaf, dumb and blind to any thing and every thing other than trade and business, and a spirit possessed also of an intense and insatiable greed of gain that will cause one to lie and cheat and misrepresent, and to hesitate at nothing that will help to increase one's possessions and obtain for him commercial and financial success. The prophet beheld and this woman, wickedness, was cast into the ephah, and the weight of lead was placed on top as though to make sure that wickedness would remain in that ephah.

Then the prophet lifted up his eyes and behold, there came forth two women, possibly of such character as the daughters of the horse-leach (Prov. 30:11-17), having the wings (godless ambition and covetousness) of a stork (a bird noted for having very large wings), and the wind (for the present a satanic agency), was in their wings and they were seen to lift up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. God is in heaven; man is on the earth; this business was lifted between

earth and heaven which suggests that it was to be under the control of the Devil, the prince of the powers of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). The prophet then asked, Whither do these women bear the ephah?—that representation of debased commercialism, satanic greed, injustice and oppression. The reply of the angel who talked with the prophet was, To build it an house in the land of Shinar (which is the Hebrew name for Babylonia); *and it shall be established and set there upon her own base.*

Of the country of Babylonia, or Shinar, the city of Babylon was not only the Capital, but it was also the great commercial center. It was through Babylon that the trade route passed; and to that once proud city of magnificence and luxury and riches the merchants from both the East and the West came to sell their wares or to buy their supply of merchandise for trading elsewhere. And this prophecy of Zechariah was delivered but a brief period before that city was overthrown and destroyed by the Medes. It is a prophecy, therefore, that is yet to be fulfilled, and in all the land of Shinar there is no other site that will compare with that of ancient Babylon in the advantages of location, and in the facilities that can be provided for transportation and for commerce in general.

Even today capitalists are hurrying to complete the Bagdad railroad in order to care for and to further develop the great possibilities of trade and business in that country and in the surrounding densely populated regions. Hence it need surprise no one if in the daily papers they read the announcement before a great while now that the Bagdad railroad will be extended to Babylon and to the head waters of the Persian Gulf. Such an event will not be opposed to prophecy, but, rather, the rebuilding of Babylon the great commercial city in the latter days will fulfil prophecy.

Having then already explained that Mystery Babylon, built on seven hills, was the city of papal Rome, and having foretold her destruction by the ten kings from the East, the Seer next proceeds to record the doom of Babylon the great, the literal city as it shall again be restored, and in due time become the Capital of the Beast's empire. It then will be finally de-

stroyed by the great earthquake and never again be inhabited except by demons and lost souls who will be the offscouring of the earth. Thus great Babylon will come in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

Revelation of the Intimate Relation Between MYSTERY, BABYLON and Babylon the Great

In the vision of MYSTERY, BABYLON, the first Beast, or Antichrist, is seen in his relation to the false and idolatrous system of religion to be promoted by the second beast. And in the vision of Babylon the great, the commercial city, the second beast, as the Scarlet woman, is shown in relation to the civil power of which the first Beast will be the head, and also in relation to the wickedness and abominations that will infest the Capital city of the empire of the Antichrist. Thus responsibility is shared alike by both of these beasts. The cities are separate and distinct but the religio-political system under which they will be governed is but one system, and the two beasts under the control of Satan are so intimately related and at agreement that whatever the one does is with the full knowledge and consent of the other. Both of these beasts will act at all times in obedience to the will of Satan. Hence all the lewdness and crimes of the Scarlet woman, or papal Rome, are here charged against the commercial city, or Babylon the great, which is also the Capital of the Beast's empire (v. 5).

God's People Warned to Flee Out of Babylon

> "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (ch. 18:4, 5).

"Her plagues," namely all those judgments described under the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowls of the wrath of God; but especially the judgments of the last forty-two months which begin the great tribulation and which are sent for the purpose of destroying the empire of the

Beast. Those mentioned as "My people," who then will be in that city are Jewish representatives of the house of Jacob who will be attracted to Babylon, as they are everywhere today, merely by the hope of commercial gain. They will then be situated as was Lot in Sodom just before divine judgments overwhelmed it, and they are warned to flee out of that doomed city while yet there was time. Their place was in Jerusalem rather than at the headquarters of the enemies of God and of their own people. And they might far better submit themselves voluntarily to privations and suffering in the holy city than to share the plagues that fill up the wrath of God, as all certainly must do who choose to enjoy the pleasures of sin, and who determinedly remain in Babylon, the doomed city, to secure for themselves commercial gains and the wages of unrighteousness.

Babylon Will Reap Even as She Has Sown

> "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: For she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (ch. 18:6-8).

By some authorities the command to reward her is assumed to be addressed to God's people who are called to come out of her. But that command is more probably intended for the angels with the seven judgment bowls. These angels are God's redeemed and they will be commissioned to execute God's wrath upon the empire of Antichrist as represented by the Capital city. And she is to be rewarded DOUBLE, and her cup is to be filled unto her DOUBLE. This will be accomplished because the empire of the Beast will not only suffer under the trumpet judgments which it will experience the same as the nation of Israel, but in addition thereto the bowl judgments will be visited upon those having the mark of the Beast, and be limited to such exclusively. Thus the land of

Israel suffers only a third part, while the empire of the Beast suffers the two thirds and so the judgment is completed.

Speaking through His prophet God refers to having delivered His people into the hands of the Chaldeans, and to their treatment of the Jews as captives in Babylon. Then, addressing that city, He says:

> "Thou saidst, I shall be a lady forever: so that thou didst not lay these things (the affliction of the Jews for their sins) to heart, neither didst thou remember *the latter end of it.* Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasure, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children. But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood; they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. 47:6-9).

At the time of which the Seer writes, that prediction will be fulfilled: in one day the great earthquake will bring upon Babylon death, mourning and famine, and as a result of the earthquake she shall be consumed with fire. Fire would follow almost necessarily from the destruction wrought by the great earthquake, which however, will be the immediate agency employed for the destruction of the city. Thus, like the book of Jeremiah to which the Stone was tied, and which was then cast into the Euphrates river, so in a moment, without any warning, Babylon the great will be swallowed up and disappear from sight, and will never again be rebuilt.

Human Lamentation Over the Fall of Babylon

How the surviving earth dwellers will regard the utter ruin and desolation of the great city Babylon is declared:

> "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of

gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand a far off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to naught. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness; for in one hour is she made desolate" (ch. 18:9-19).

These earth dwellers include the kings who have shared the guilt and spiritual unchastity of the idolatrous city, and who lived deliciously with her; also the merchants who have made their profits and amassed great fortunes from the sale of all manner of merchandise such as appeals to the idle rich, including even the souls of men. These merchants were made rich chiefly by supplying the demands of this great and luxurious Metropolis of the world. Further, the shipmasters and sailors and all stockholders in great corporations that owned and had vessels in the sea, and who also were made rich by reason of the costliness of this proud and magnificent city,—these all unite in a loud and bitter cry of lamentation and mourning, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come upon thee.

The kings will bewail and lament for her in terror because of the fear of her torment since they have shared her guilt. The less wealthy merchants shall weep and mourn over her because

no man buyeth their merchandise any more. The rich capitalists will not only weep, but they shall bewail also because in one hour so great riches, the one and only thing in which their interest is centered, or that they consider worth while, is come to nought. As a result they must suffer the loss of all their coveted investments in that city, and in her ruin they will likewise be impoverished. The shipmasters, sailors and representatives of corporations having ships plying the sea will cast dust on their heads and cry, weeping and wailing, because of their financial losses, and because their occupation is gone and they have no other means for obtaining a livelihood. It will indeed be a sorrowful crowd of frantic mourners: each will be found weeping and gnashing his teeth for himself, or on his own account, either because of the fear of God's wrath falling on him, or because of unspeakable sorrow for the loss of his position, or trade, or his money and his other material possessions. And their grief will be inconsolable, for it will be only the sorrow of the world that worketh death (2 Cor. 7:10).

Both the Holy Angels and the Redeemed Rejoice Over Babylon's Destruction

On the other hand the heavenly hosts, including both the holy angels and the redeemed, view the utter destruction and ruin of Babylon the great with evident joy and pleasure. The angel that with a loud voice has announced the fall of Babylon exclaims in his joy:

> "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her" (ch. 18:20).

To this invitation unquestionably the heavens will fittingly respond:

> "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (ch. 18:21).

This act of the angel signifies that the predictions of Isaiah and of Jeremiah will at that time be literally fulfilled as will

be all other prophecies of God's Word if men only have the faith to believe, and the patience to wait the appointed time:

> "For the Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

The heavenly hosts announce also that after Babylon has been cast down thus by the STONE that then there will be no further human activity to be found in her:

> "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsover craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (ch. 18:22-24).

Any city without music or craftsmen or industry or light or the voice of bridegroom or bride would be reduced to utter desolation, and the angelic hosts proclaim that such will be the condition of Babylon after God has judged her, and they know that the fate in store for her will be a just judgment. According to a legend that has come down from the first century of the present era, the legend of Nero Redivivus, ancient Babylon, the Capital city of the Beast and the political headquarters of his empire, was to have at its head the Antichrist in the person of the rejected Roman emperor Nero who died by his own sword about 68 A. D. This emperor was a monster of cruelty and one of the bloodiest persecutors of both Jews and Christians that ever lived and his character will not be improved when he ascendeth out of the bottomless pit to become the world emperor agreeable to Satan's purpose. His Capital then, the great city of Babylon, will be the representative city of iniquity and the habitation of cruelty so that she may be justly held responsible for all the evil to be found on the

earth including the blood of prophets and of saints and of all that were slain on the earth. Hence the heavenly hosts shed no tears over her ruined and desolate state from which she will not again arise. Theirs is not the voice of weeping, wailing, lamentation and mourning, but instead, heaven will ring with their shouts of joy and gladness in response to the proclamation of the mighty angel: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

Chapter XXVII

THE RETURN OF THE KING OF KINGS

The End of the Times of the Gentiles

Jesus declared, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:24). Those "times" would appear to have been about fulfilled, therefore, when the great earthquake will cause the cities of the nations, including great Babylon, to fall, and when, also, as a result, the great city of Jerusalem will be divided into three parts. Three, being the number of the Trinity and of a divine work, suggests that at that very time God will take possession of the holy city which will then no longer be trodden under Gentile feet. That would be the end also of the forty-two months, or the twelve hundred and sixty days, or of a time, times, and a half (Dan. 12:7).

But the prophet Daniel gives another reckoning also. Referring to events which will occur in the midst of the (year) week, or just before the last three and a half years begin, when the Antichrist will break the covenant he made with many of Daniel's people, and when in God's temple at Jerusalem he will require all peoples to worship him as God, Daniel says,

> "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days" (Dan. 12:11).

This is thirty days beyond the forty-two months at the end of which the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. The cities of the nations will have been destroyed by the earthquake, and of the organized empire of the Beast there will be left only his armies. It would appear probable, therefore, that thirty days after the earthquake, the terrible storm of great hail and of lightning

will occur that will not only add to the destruction of the cities of the nations and complete the ruin of Babylon, but it will also destroy the armies of the Antichrist which will have withdrawn from Jerusalem to the field of Armageddon where the returning Christ, on the great day of the Lord, will tread alone the winepress of the wrath of God without the city (Jerusalem).

Following that event there will be the Supper of the great God to be given to all the fowls of the heaven. These vultures are called to come that they may eat the flesh of the men and of the horses slain on the bloody field of Armageddon, and it will probably require a month and a half, or forty-five days, before the carcasses of all the slain will have been consumed (Matt. 24:28). Hence Daniel further declares:

> "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the three thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (Dan. 12:12).

The reason is evident: The enemies of Christ at that time will have perished from the earth; the earth herself also will have been purified by the fires of divine judgments, and the way will therefore be prepared for the glories and blessedness of the Kingdom age to begin.

Heavenly Alleluias Announce the Reign of the Christ Begun

In the study of this Book of the Revelation attention has already been called to the fact that after the opening of the sixth seal, six being the number of evil, of Satan, and of Antichrist, the Gentile world powers have reached the end of their day of opportunity and are brought face to face with the great day of Christ's wrath (ch. 6:17). Again, after the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the second woe trumpet, the earthquake partially destroyed the holy city Jerusalem, slew part of its inhabitants who were of the house of Jacob and caused the remnant of them affrighted to give glory to the God of heaven (ch. 11:13). And after the sixth bowl of wrath was poured out the great river Euphrates was dried up, and thus was prepared the way of the kings of the East who were then in league with the Antichrist, and who were gathered

together under his command at Armageddon for the battle of the great day of God Almighty (ch. 16:12-16).

Then when the seventh seal was opened, seven being the number of dispensational fulness and completion, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour (ch. 8:1); after the seventh trumpet sounded both the harvest of the earth and the vintage of the clusters of the vine of the earth were reaped (ch. 14:14-20), and after the seventh bowl was poured out the great earthquake caused Jerusalem to be divided into three parts, and the cities of the Gentile nations, including great Babylon, to fall (ch. 16:17-20). Thirty days thereafter there followed the great hail storm (ch. 16:21), that completed the ruin and desolation which God will have brought upon the earth (Ps. 46:1-8). These terrible divine judgments were all ordered and controlled by Christ, the glorified Son of Man. He was not in them (1 Kings 19:1-12), but these judgments were sent before Him (Ps. 50:3), as a warning that He would no longer keep silence.

At the end of the thirty days, therefore, or just before the hail storm, the time will have come for His Personal return in His glory to this earth to crush before Him every foe, to smite rebellious nations with the iron rod of justice (Ps. 2:9), to sit in His throne of glory (Matt. 25:31),—the throne of His father David, and to reign on the earth.

The announcement of the fall of Babylon the great, the Capital city of the Beast's empire, appears to have been the signal for which, after the seventh seal was opened, the angels in heaven kept silence for the space of half an hour (ch. 8:1). Now the signal has been given, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" and as though in response to the glad cry, "Rejoice over her thou heaven," the Seer receives another vision of events that occur in heaven preparatory to Christ's return to this earth.

> "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God. For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore (papal Rome), which did corrupt the earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke (Babylon the great) rose up

> forever and ever, or to the ages of the ages. And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent REIGNETH" (ch. 19:1-6).

Thus will heaven ring with Alleluias when the set time arrives for the Son of Man to take possession of His inheritance and to reign in His Kingdom on the earth.

The Marriage of the Lamb

But one other event is necessary to complete the preparation for the return of the King in His glory. Hence the voice of the great multitude proclaim:

> "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (ch. 19:7, 8).

As the very climax of His beatitudes, Jesus said,

> "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:11, 12).

Here, then, we learn the great reward: the marriage of the Lamb to His Wife,—the True Church.

There is no higher, no holier, no more blessed and joyous relation that can obtain between a man and a woman than true marriage. The marriage relation means more than the common possession of each other, more than the sharing on a basis of equality all that either may possess, more than the mutual exchange of admiration for personal charms, or of confidence and trust in the integrity each of the other. True marriage

means all of these things, but in addition to all of these things, and above them, and more than all else it means the union of hearts such as will ever result in sincerest love and in unselfish devotion, such as will cause each to live for the other and to truly desire to promote the welfare, the comfort and the happiness of the other rather than of SELF (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

One who thinks chiefly of self, who talks for the most part of things that promote self-interests, who takes opportunity to act with downright selfishness, and therefore, one who is self-centered, self-opinionated and self-willed, is incapable of entering into a true marriage relation with any one. In the marriage relation, to whatever degree SELF is made first and exalted, to that extent the relation will prove disappointing, unsatisfactory and uncongenial. The love of self will destroy true love and will engender strifes, bitterness and indifference, or even hatred. And it is such results of the union that so frequently cause marriage to end in failure.

And in Scripture imagery the figure of marriage is employed to set forth the true fellowship and intimacy that will ever exist between God and His people who truly love and faithfully serve Him. The nation of Israel was represented as married to Jehovah. He was her Husband; she was His wife (Hos. 2:19; Isa. 54:1-8; Eze. 16:7). When that nation turned away from the true God and became a worshiper of idols she was pictured by the prophets as an unfaithful wife and an adulteress. So likewise the True Church is represented as the Bride of Christ. He loved the Church with an everlasting love and gave Himself up to the death of the Cross for her. He nourished and cherished the Church that He might sanctify it, and present it to Himself glorious in holiness, and without blemish in the presence of His glory. It was therefore the part of the Church as His Bride to love Christ devotedly, to serve Him faithfully and to reverence Him as her Head and Husband (Eph. 5:21-33), the One altogether lovely and the Chiefest among ten thousand.

And among the redeemed there are those who by the help of divine grace have met the requirements and so secured for themselves a full reward. And now the time has come for the manifestation to all in heaven and on earth of the near and

blessed relation between Christ and those who shall form the True Church, "The marriage of the Lamb has come; His Wife has made herself ready. To her therefore, as the Bride of Christ, there is given public recognition and acknowledgement before God and the holy angels." It was granted her that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Note that *it was granted* to the Church thus to be arrayed. The wedding garment was her gift from the Bridegroom, but by her love, devotion, service, sacrifices, which were the fruits of her faith in Him, *the Wife had made Herself ready.*

Probably the same voice that came out from the throne, and that had called upon all to praise God, again was heard by the Seer,

> "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (ch. 19:9, 10).

These blessed ones are the invited guests. They have been redeemed not less than the Wife, but they had not attained to the same degree of glory and of honor. They are not the Bride of the Lamb, but they are the friends of the Bridegroom, and as such they are invited to share with Him the joy and gladness of the marriage supper. In the poetry of the psalms the Lamb's Wife, or the True Church, is referred to as "the daughter of the King," or of the Heavenly Father, and these blessed ones who will be the welcome guests on this occasion are represented as Her companions:

> "The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace" (Ps. 45:13-15).

The scene here pictured is not fiction. The Seer is assured that there has been revealed to him the truth of God, and he is ready to worship the heavenly messenger. But as a redeemed and glorified fellowservant of John this messenger is not an object of worship. He directs the Seer to worship God, and declares, The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The Testimony of Jesus means, not the witness borne to Him, but rather the witness He Himself has borne to the things affirmed to be, "The true and faithful sayings of God." John therefore had received the witness of God and He alone was to be worshiped and praised by the Seer for this precious revelation of truth.

The Second Advent: The King Comes in His Glory with the Armies of Heaven

After these events in heaven are duly recorded the attention of the Seer is directed to a Rider on a white horse Who is none other than the King of all glory returning to this earth at His Second Advent.

> "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war" (ch. 19:11).

Here then is the coming answer to the prayer which Jesus taught His disciples, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven." This is the event for which the saints have waited for centuries, saying, "Come Lord Jesus; come quickly." Jesus is here returning to take possession of His inheritance, the earth, and to occupy His throne. Hence He appears riding upon a horse, the symbol of earthly agencies; and it is a white horse which signifies that justice and righteousness will characterize the government and rule that Christ will establish and maintain here on the earth.

> "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God" (ch. 19:12, 13).

His eyes flashing fire indicate the holy and righteous wrath and just indignation which He is about to visit upon His enemies, the Antichrist and his armies that will then be gathered at Armageddon. Jesus went into the far country (heaven) to receive for Himself a Kingdom. Now He is returning, even as He predicted He would, having upon His head the crowns of all earthly kings. These crowns all belong to Him of right, and they will be in His possession then (Lk. 19:12; Matt. 25:14; Mk. 13:34). Probably that unknown name will be in addition to the names which He shall be called, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6), and different also from the name given to Him at His birth. It will be a name that God will give Him, and that no man knoweth:

> "A name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

His vesture will be dipped in blood. Possibly His own, the blood of atonement as some claim. But far more likely there is here symbolized the blood of His enemies whom He is about to tread down in His wrath and fury (Isa. 63:1-6). Even now He is called, The Word of God, and that fixes His identity beyond question. This rider is the same Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 2, 14), but whereas at His First Advent He had emptied Himself of the power and glory that were His equally with the Father, now the Son of Man, having once suffered for sin and entered into His glory as the God-Man, appears as the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

> "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (ch. 14-16).

The armies on white horses are not the angelic hosts, His holy angels (Matt. 25:31), who will undoubtedly accompany Him on His return. Such heavenly agencies are never represented as being mounted on horses, the symbols of earthly agencies. Jesus "sends forth His angels," while these armies follow Him, and the riders are clothed in the very garments that adorn the Wife, and which are declared to be "the righteousness of saints. The armies represent, therefore, the hosts of redeemed ones all of whom will be clothed in the fine linen, white and clean (Jude 14; Rev. 5:10). Such, having been counted worthy to share in the Rapture of the saints, are to be ever with the Lord (1 Thes. 4:17), and they will follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth (ch. 14:4). These armies, therefore, are the redeemed who will be with Him when He returns: they are to share His glory as rulers in the Kingdom, and to reign with Him on the earth. Thus both the Son of Man Himself and the great armies of the redeemed that will follow Him will again serve as earthly agencies to accomplish God's will, and so they appear on white horses.

The sword out of His mouth is the Word of God, His own word, of sovereign authority and power that whether spoken to the angels or to the winds or to the waves of the sea or to the dead who are in their graves, will be heard and will command obedience (Ps. 29:1-11). Here especially it is His word with which He shall smite the nations of the Antichrist, and with which He shall rule such of these nations as do not perish in the last judgment with a rod of iron, or with inflexible justice and righteousness.

But at that time these very nations are in rebellion against Him. They will have been gathered in marshall array for the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and before Christ can rule them with justice and with equity they must learn to submit to Him. Hence the issue of battle must decide for all these nations whether Christ or Antichrist is to be recognized as the ruler of this earth. The returning Lord, therefore, comes to tread the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God (chs. 14:18-20; 15:16, 17-21; 19:17-21), and that His enemies may know against Whom they are to battle Jesus has written on His vesture and on His thigh the title that

belongs to Him alone, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." In that day the enemies of Christ shall be utterly wasted and scattered (Isa. 25:1-12), and Christ shall be exalted in the earth.

Chapter XXVIII

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

The Supper of the Great God

> "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (ch. 19:17-18).

In this vision the Seer describes the awful character and the results of the battle of Armageddon which will be the closing event on the day of the Lord and with which this present evil age will end.

Scofield's Note on This Verse

A Note on these verses in Scofield's Reference Bible explains as follows:

> "Armageddon (the ancient hill and valley of Megiddo, west of Jordan in the plain of Jezreel) is the appointed place for the beginning of the great battle in which the Lord, at His coming in glory, will deliver the Jewish remnant besieged by the Gentile world-powers under the Beast and False Prophet (Rev. 16:13-16; Zech. 12:1-9). Apparently the besieging hosts, whose approach to Jerusalem is described in Isa. 10:28-33, alarmed by the signs that precede the Lord's coming (Matt. 24:29, 30), have fallen back to Megiddo, after the events of Zech. 14:2, where their destruction begins; a destruction consummated in Moab and the plains of Idumea (Isa. 63:1-6). This battle is the first event in 'the day of Jehovah' (Isa. 2:12, refs.), and is the fulfilment of the smiting-stone prophecy of Dan. 2:35."

It appears to be a reasonable conclusion that the utter rout and destruction of the larger part at least of these mighty armies of the Antichrist will be accomplished by means of the great hail out of heaven every stone of which will be about the weight of a talent. Such a storm would most certainly make the plague of hail exceedingly great and bring about the destruction of the great bodies of organized men encamped in the open fields (ch. 16:21). And such a vast multitude of men and of horses, suddenly crushed and their bodies mangled by the great hailstones, would supply an immense quantity of blood. The warmth of these bodies and of the blood also would cause the hail to melt quickly, and thus as a great stream colored with the blood of the slain, it would flow on like a river of blood such as the Seer beheld when the great winepress of the wrath of God was trodden without the city, and when blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs (ch. 14:20). As God declared to Job, it was just such treasures of hail that He had reserved for the day of trouble and of war, and it seems reasonably certain that this day of the great battle of God Almighty will be the occasion when God will employ this munition of the heavens to render to the proud and haughty ones of earth their just deserts.

The carcasses of the slain will thus cover the battlefield of Armageddon, and those who will escape the slaughter will give no thought to the burial of the dead, but rather, they will flee away panic stricken and in terror. These dead bodies, therefore, will serve for food at the supper of the great God to which all the fowls, vultures and eagles that fly in the midst of heaven will be called to partake.

As to the result of this battle there will be no uncertainty, and so even before the destruction falls the angel standing in the sun calls to the fowls, "Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God."

The Armies of Antichrist, and Doom of All Opposed to the King of Kings

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him

> that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (ch. 19:19-21).

That sword is the sovereign word of Him who has but to speak and it is done; to command and it will stand fast (Ps. 33:9). This gathering of mighty armies, which the Seer here beheld, represents the entire force of organized opposition to the King eternal, immortal and invisible Who is now about to appear. All those in these armies have been trusting in false gods and in dumb idols that cannot rise up to their help, and much less can they afford them protection and deliverance from the Rider on the white horse, Who in the Song of Moses contrasts Himself with the rock in which they have trusted when He declares:

> "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god beside Me. I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand. For I lift up My hand to heaven, and say (sware), I live for ever. If I whet My glittering sword, and Mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to Mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me. I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives (wounded), from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy" (Deut. 32:37-42).

Those who are here seen gathered together to make war against Him Who sat on the white horse and against His armies were the Beast and the False Prophet and the kings of the whole earth and their armies. The doom of part of this iniquitous system of world powers has already been considered and it included (1) Mystery Babylon, or papal Rome that was destroyed by the ten kings; (2) Babylon the Great, the literal city and Capital of the Beast's empire which was destroyed by the great earthquake; and now the result of the

great battle of Armageddon, as here revealed, will be the doom of (3) the Beast, the Antichrist; (4) the False Prophet, the other beast; (5) the kings of the Gentile world; (6) their armies, and (7) the dragon who deceiveth the whole world.

The Beast and the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him were taken prisoners and both were cast alive into a lake of brimstone. This lake is a symbol of the second death, as explained in chs. 20:13; 21:8. It is also "the place prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41), and the second death describes the future state of all the impenitently wicked who shall be banished from God and compelled to abide under His wrath (John 8:21, 24; 3:36).

Such teachings of Scripture plainly declare that there will be future punishment, not less than future reward. And as to the duration of future punishment Jesus Himself declared: "They shall *abide* under the wrath of God. To ABIDE may possibly mean, as some very spiritually minded Christians teach and believe, to continue merely for the ages of the ages; but if that be a fact it is one of the secret things that belongs unto the Lord our God with which it would be wise for His children not to meddle, but rather they should trust Him as the Judge of all the earth to do right.

The remnant were slain with the sword of Him Who sat upon the horse . . . the fowls were filled with their flesh. Thus will be fulfilled the prediction of Jesus, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together (Matt. 24:28). The Beast and the False Prophet were taken alive, and their judgment and the execution of their sentence proceeded without delay: they were cast into a lake of brimstone. But not so the remnant that were slain: they were destroyed by physical death. Hence their trial and the execution of the sentence that will be passed upon them await the judgment of the Great White Throne when the books will be opened and the dead will be judged out of those things which were written in them, according to their works (ch. 20:12). That, however, will be only after the Kingdom age has ended. These events that have just been considered will end "the times of the Gentiles," and but one thing more remains to be accomplished in order to bring to a close "this present evil age," and to fully

prepare the way for the Kingdom age. The next vision describes the last event of the age.

Satan Is Bound for a Thousand Years

> "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (ch. 20:1-3).

The key to the bottomless pit is a figure that signifies the power and authority to open or close at will this pit, which for the present is the abode of evil spirits. So also the chain wherewith Satan was to be bound a thousand years is used here as elsewhere in Scripture as a mere figure of speech. Of the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, Jude declares: "They are reserved in age-lasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (v. 6). The apostle Peter, speaking of these same fallen angels, says: "God . . . delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4). The chain that will be sufficient to bind Satan is probably the will and decree of Almighty God which even today holds the Devil under leash, restricts his operations and prevents him from going one step beyond the limit of divine and sovereign permission. God's will and decree, behind which is the power of omnipotence, make a threefold cord, or chain, that is not quickly broken (Eccle. 4:12). Omnipotent power will cast Satan into the bottomless pit; the will of God will shut him up in that place of abode; and God's decree will set a seal upon him that he can neither break nor remove. In the bottomless pit, therefore, or in the abyss, the Devil will remain till the thousand years be fulfilled; then he will be loosed for a little season. The thousand years are probably to be understood as literal, but if one prefers to believe otherwise he has a right to his own opinion. The particular length of time is not a matter of sufficient importance to justify a strife of words to no profit.

After the original creation, when this earth *was not created* "without form and void" (Jer. 4:23-26; Isa. 24:1; 45:18), and before it had undergone a cataclysmic change, as the result of a divine judgment, which caused this earth to "be without form and void," it was probably inhabited by some pre-adamic race of which practically nothing is known. Some authorities believe they can find hints at least in the Scriptures to indicate that the earth was originally inhabited by a race of angelic beings, and they suggest that it was on this very earth that Satan and his fallen angels were tested. This would be interesting if true, and it may be entertained as a mere suggestion, or possibility, but the claim has not been proven and probably it cannot be proved.

However, it can be satisfactorily established, for those at least who believe the Bible, that the present race of mortals, or the human family, was created on this earth after its restoration; and that was about six thousand years ago. Six is the number of evil and another thousand years, or the Kingdom age, would complete seven thousand, and seven is the number of dispensational fulness. Thus the new heaven and the new earth would begin the eighth thousand years, and eight is the number of new beginning. Aside from the fact that a literal thousand years, as the period during which Satan is to be bound, and during which earth's inhabitants also will enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom age, fits into what appears to be the plan of God, as indicated by sacred numbers, there probably is no other proof by which to determine whether the thousand years here mentioned are to be understood in a literal or symbolic sense. Because it is believed that the argument, based on sacred numbers, is sufficient, is the reason for stating, as above, that the thousand years are probably used in a literal sense.

The Kingdom of God Is Established

> "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the Beast,

> neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (ch. 20:4, 5).

The Kingdom age will begin immediately after Satan is bound and imprisoned in the bottomless pit. Those who will occupy the thrones are probably the saints who will return with Christ. The judgment given unto them will be the right, or the authority, to pass judgment upon all appearing before them for trial. It will be one of the special privileges and honors conferred upon these reigning saints to judge (1) the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28); (2) the world, or earth's inhabitants who have survived the desolating judgments that will have brought such terrible distress to the nations. And there will be many such nations to be judged (Matt. 25:31-46). The judgment to be passed on the nations at that time it would seem, depends on what had been their manner of treating Christ's brethren, the seed of Abraham. According to the Abrahamic Covenant those who blessed him were to be blessed, and those who cursed him were to be cursed. Hence while nations that had treated the Jews humanely were to enjoy for an age the blessings of the Kingdom, on the other hand the nations that had ill-treated or neglected to deal fairly with God's Israel, were to be driven forth, it would appear, to inhabit a land barren and desolate. Such would be the punishment of all the nations that had identified themselves with the Antichrist, and whose armies will have perished at Armageddon (Joel 2:12, 13, 18-20). Further, the enthroned ones are to judge (3) the angels (1 Cor. 6:2, 3). The reference is probably to those angels who are at present "reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

But in addition to these thrones and their occupants the Seer beheld the martyrs of Jesus. They were not unclothed, or disembodied spirits. The word, soul, is frequently used in Scripture to signify persons dwelling in the flesh (Prov. 11:30; Acts 2:41; 7:14; 2 Pet. 2:14), and it is evidently so employed here. The reference is to those Christians who suffered martyrdom because they refused to own allegiance to the Antichrist. For that reason they were beheaded, but now these souls "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

The First Resurrection

> "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (ch. 20:5, 6).

God is not the author of confusion. Rather, He has His plans that are all carried out in an orderly manner. Hence, as might be expected, there is a divine plan and order for the resurrection of the dead, and the Scriptures declare that "every man will be raised in his own order." And as has been revealed for our learning, the divine order seems to be as follows: "Christ the first fruits; afterward (Gr. *eita*) they that are Christ's at His coming. Then (Afterward, Gr. *eita*), when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, cometh the end (of the resurrection) (1 Cor. 15:23, 24). In other words, the resurrection of the rest of the dead is delayed until the end of the thousand years.

Even the first resurrection, which will include none but true believers, is not to be a general resurrection. Rather it shall be among them also according to the rule: "Every man in his own order." There is an order to be observed among believers in Christ, which as indicated in the Scriptures, will proceed about as follows: (1) The saints that came out of their graves immediately following Christ's resurrection, and whom the Seer beheld in heaven and mentions as "the elders" (Matt. 27:52, 53; Rev. 4:4); (2) The resurrection of those who have loved His appearing, and who with other saints of that class living on the earth at that time "will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." This will take place just before the apostacy of the Visible Church, and so all whom Christ receives at that time will escape the judgment to be sent on the earth (1 Thes. 4:13-18; Lk. 21:36; 17:33-37); (3) The resurrection of the just, or of such as are justified by their faith even though their works of faith have not been all that they might and should have been (Lk. 14:13, 14); and then, (4) The resurrection of the tribulation saints at the beginning of the Kingdom age some of whom, even though among the

last to have part in the first resurrection, will receive higher honors and greater rewards than some who have preceded them in the resurrection unto life (Rev. 20:4; Matt. 19:30; 20:16; Lk. 13:30). Thus apparently each of these four classes will be included in the first resurrection, and every man will be raised in his own order. But all these persons are alike blessed and holy; they have escaped the power of the second death and belong to the royal priesthood who will live and reign with Christ.

It is especially for the comfort and encouragement of those who shall constitute the tribulation saints that just previous to the judgments the announcement is made, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from henceforth.*" They will be specially blessed because as the martyrs of Jesus, which they are almost certain to be if they will not worship the Beast, or his image, or receive his mark upon their forehead, or in their hands, they are of those who shall reign with Christ a thousand years.

Blessings of the Kingdom Age

Concerning the character and blessings of the Kingdom age the Seer is given no vision to record because that truth is abundantly revealed and declared by all of the Old Testament prophets, especially as the blessings were related to the nation of Israel. Isaiah gives full and glowing descriptions of the peace and blessedness of the Kingdom age (Isa. 4:3-6; 9:6, 7; 11:1-16; 12:1-6; 14:1-8; 25:19; 26:1-19; 35:1-10; 52:1-10; 60:8-22; 61:3-11; 66:10-14) as also do all the other Old Testament prophets beginning with Moses. And Jesus declares that those who would not believe these prophets, neither would they believe one who rose from the dead, that is Himself; for He spake by the prophets, and their messages have behind them all the authority and truth of His own word. Jesus commands therefore, "Hear them," that is the prophets. And it was to their messages particularly that the apostle Paul referred when he said:

> "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of (the natural) man, the things that God hath prepared (in the Kingdom age) for them that love Him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit*" (1 Cor. 2:9, 10).

Since these truths are so abundantly described and witnessed to by Old Testament prophets there is but little more revealed on that subject in the New Testament, and practically nothing at all in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

But Jesus Himself has made it abundantly clear that, as related not to salvation but to the Kingdom of God, there are four classes of persons: (1) Those who as children of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), shall *inherit* the Kingdom (Matt. 25:14); (2) Those who have little to commend them other than their orthodoxy, or their riches, are not far from, but *shall hardly enter* the Kingdom (Matt. 19:23; Mk. 12:32-34); (3) Those whose righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees (Matt. 5:20), or who are content with a mere confession of Jesus as Lord (Matt. 7:21), or who have not been converted and become as little children, *cannot enter* the Kingdom; and, then (4) Those who have not been born again, or from above, *cannot even see* the Kingdom of God (John 3:3).

It is nowhere said in the Bible of any of these classes of professed believers in Christ that they shall not or cannot be saved. Rather, to those who questioned such a possibility, the answer of Jesus was, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:25, 26). The Bible reveals that there are those who have no part in the first resurrection, who are therefore to be classed with *"the rest of the dead,* who live not again until the thousand years are finished," and who, therefore, will neither enter nor see the Kingdom, and much less will they be inheritors of the Kingdom. Yet at the end of the thousand years when the rest of the dead are raised at the resurrection unto life or unto damnation (John 5:28, 29; Dan. 12:2), and when the dead are called to stand before the Great White Throne, then the book of life will be opened, and of those who are judged at that time it is declared that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (ch. 20:11-15). The inference is clear that some, even at this last judgment, will be found written in the book of life, and so they will be saved. The mercy and grace of God are infinitely greater than many appear willing to believe. The precious blood shed on the Cross of Calvary

is far more efficacious for the salvation of the lost than some seem to realize; and the incomprehensible love of Jesus Christ is such that He will not see and be satisfied with the travail of His soul without the salvation, even to the uttermost, of an innumerable multitude infinitely greater than that for which some philosophical systems of theology make allowance.

The Loosing of Satan

> "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints (God's Israel; His earthly people) about, and the beloved city (Jerusalem): and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (ch. 20:7-9).

Passing by the Kingdom age without further comment the Seer records as his next vision an event that will occur after the thousand years of the reign of Christ and the blessedness of His saints on earth have been finished. This event is the loosing of Satan with permission granted him to resume his work of deceiving the nations.

Since God created man a free moral agent, with the power to choose between good and evil, it has ever been part of His revealed plan to put man to a test and to hold him responsible for his choice. And for wise and beneficent reasons it has been according to the good pleasure of God's will to permit the Devil to tempt man. But on the one hand, the Devil is limited both as to the power he can exert and as to the means he can employ, in his work of tempting man, as is clearly shown in the experience of the holy man of Uz (Job, chs. 1, 2), and on the other hand, God permits no man to be tempted by the Devil beyond what he is able to bear. Thus it is possible for man, with the help of divine grace, successfully to overcome temptation, and to triumph over the tempter if he so wills to do.

And at the end of the Kingdom age, since Satan will have been bound for the entire thousand years, there will be a multi-

tude of our race then on the earth that have never been subjected to the temptation of the Devil; and it is for the purpose of testing such persons that God will loose Satan out of his prison for a little season.

Having thus regained his freedom Satan will go forth to deceive all nations of earth, and these nations are designated as "Gog and Magog." In Old Testament prophecy it is said:

> "The word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, in the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him" (Eze. 38:1, 2).

Both Shem and Japheth, the descendants of Noah, had a son named Meshech (Chron. 1:17; Gen. 10:2), and Tubal also was a son of Japheth. In explaining Ezekiel's prophecy, a Note in Scofield's Reference Bible is given as follows:

> "That the primary reference is to the northern (European) powers, headed up by Russia, all agree. The whole passage should be read in connection with Zech. 12:1-4; 14:1-9; Mt. 24:14-30; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:17-21. 'Gog' is the prince, 'Magog' his land. The reference to Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolsk) is a clear mark of identification. Russia and the northern powers have been the latest persecutors of dispersed Israel, and it is congruous both with divine justice and with the covenants (e. g. Gen. 15:18, note; Deut. 30:3, note) that destruction should fall at the climax of the last mad attempt to exterminate the remnant of Israel in Jerusalem. The whole prophecy belongs to the yet future 'day of Jehovah' (Isa. 2:10-22; Rev. 19:11-21), and to the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:14; 19:19, note), but includes also the final revolt of the nations at the close of the kingdom-age (Rev. 20:7-9)."

It is probably correct that the prophecy refers to the northern powers; but Meshech and Tubal, of whom Gog, in the land of Magog, is the chief prince, are prominent representatives of the uncircumcised, or of those who are not in covenant relation with God (Eze. 32:25-28). And Satan is here said to have gone out to deceive the nations "in the four quarters of the earth," and not merely the northern nations or powers.

It seems better suited to the context then to regard Gog and Magog as representatives at the time of all nations and countries of the earth that had not formally entered into covenant relations with God and with His Son Jesus Christ. Some of these nations had not been permitted to enter the Kingdom or to enjoy its blessings. They had been judged unworthy at the beginning of the Kingdom age and had gone "away into age-lasting punishment" (Matt. 25:41-46). And although compelled to submit to the laws of Christ's Kingdom, still they had never willingly owned allegiance to Him as their King. To such persons as these the Devil went forth, and since by nature man is corrupt; since he loves darkness rather than light and his choice is to do evil rather than good, Satan was able to deceive a multitude compared in number to the sand of the sea. Led on by the Devil, these nations will make war with the saints and lay siege to Jerusalem. Thus they had been tested; they had made their choice and incurred their responsibility. But this last desperate attempt of Satan to again get possession of the earth was quickly overcome because fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them (Heb. 6:4-6).

The Annihilation of the Soul Is Not Taught in the Scriptures

> And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night to the ages of the ages" (ch. 20:10).

If words are to be recognized as having a definite meaning, then it is certain that the doctrine of the annihilation of the soul finds no support whatever in Scripture. The Beast and the False Prophet, who were cast into the lake of fire before the Kingdom age began, are still there at the end of the thousand years, and now the Devil is sent to keep company with them, and to be tormented day and night for ever and ever, or to the ages of the ages. Such teachings suggest any thing other than annihilation.

There are earnest Bible students who are admittedly devout Christians yet who insist that punishment of eternal and endless duration is not taught in Scripture, and who therefore reason

and argue that after the ages of the ages all who are sentenced by a holy and just God to abide under His wrath, not excepting even such fearful creatures as the Devil, the Beast and the False Prophet, will then be brought to repentance, and they will be converted and saved by the infinite love of God. Thus it is claimed that in all the universe of God there will be no more sin or suffering or sorrow, and holiness and love will be universal. This is a very beautiful theory but it is a matter of reasoning and not of revelation. And it is only the things that are revealed that belong unto us and to our children, while the secret things belong unto the Lord our God (Deut. 29:29). It would seem then to be wiser and better to rest in the assurance that the Judge of all the earth will do right, and to resist the temptation to speculate in regard to the secret things that belong to God, rather than to assume, in direct contradiction to what has been plainly revealed for our learning, that God's thoughts are our thoughts, and His ways are our ways. The Bible teaches the opposite of any such conclusion, and declares that God's ways and thoughts are higher above our ways and thoughts than heaven is higher than the earth (Isa. 55:8, 9). And further, God's word declares, "It is an honor to a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling" (Prov. 20:3).

The revelation concerning Satan, that old Serpent the Devil, ends with his being cast into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night for the ages of the ages. Hence any attempt on man's part to secure for him an entrance into heaven and a place among the redeemed would only be to engage in the useless contention and strife of one that beateth the air (1 Cor. 9:26).

The Great White Throne

Attention is next directed by the Seer to the last judgment:

> "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (ch. 20:11).

At the beginning of this prophecy the Seer gives a description of the glorified Son of Man, but there is no description attempted of the One Who sat on the Rainbow Judgment Throne,

beyond saying that He was to look upon like a jasper and a sardius (Rev. 4:2, 3). And of the Occupant of the Great White Throne it is only declared, "From His face the earth and the heaven fled away. Evidently this indescribably glorious Being is God the Father, the First Person of the adorable Trinity. The event here revealed brings us to the time to which the apostle referred:

> "Then cometh the end (of the resurrection), when He (Christ) shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him Who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

This evidently is not the same judgment scene as the one recorded in Matt. 25:31-46, because in that scene Jesus sits on the throne of his glory; He is passing judgment on the nations of the earth to decide which of them is worthy to enjoy the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and which deserve to be sentenced to age-lasting punishment. On the other hand, in the judgment scene recorded here in Revelation, it is God the Father Who occupies the Great White Throne, and it is not living nations but the dead who are to be judged. Further, the place of the judgment is not this earth, because the heaven and earth also have fled away; and the verdict is not to determine who shall enjoy and who shall be denied Kingdom blessings and rewards, because the Kingdom age has ended. The verdict on this occasion will decide who are entitled to life and who deserve to be cast into the lake of fire which is the second death. These judgment scenes, therefore, are entirely different.

The Judgment of the Dead

> "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (ch. 20:12).

Whatever may be the character of the record, and however or by whomsoever it is kept, of one thing all may be sure, and that is that in heaven there is a correct and full account of every one's deeds whether good or evil. In this present time, the good men do, or try to do, may be neither understood nor appreciated, and so they receive but little or no reward. Still it pays to do good, because the unselfish desire and intention, the pleasant smile of encouragement, the kindly word, the helpful act, however these things may pass unnoticed now, they will all be written down in God's book of remembrance (Mal. 3:16), and if the good we do springs from a right motive and a sincere desire to obey and please God it will assure that the names of all such persons shall be written in the book of life. The good may not be sufficient, or of a kind, to secure entrance into and enjoyment of Kingdom blessings and rewards, but before the Great White Throne it will be recognized, appreciated and rewarded.

And on the other hand, the evil men do, although it may not receive deserved punishment now, will not then and there escape attention; because if it be a kind and character that springs from selfish and wicked motives, and that is persisted in without true repentence regardless of the accusations of conscience, that fact also will be recorded in heaven, and men will have to face the fact in the white light of that judgment throne. And on the irrevocable sentence of a holy and just God whosoever, small or great, is not found written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire.

Not One of the Dead At that Time Escape that Judgment

As this will be the final judgment it will include all those who have not been previously judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works:

> "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (ch. 20:13-15).

It is the teaching of Scripture that all men, both those to whom God grants the privilege of having part in the first resurrection and those also whose resurrection is delayed until the final judgment, shall be judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works, and that each man also shall be rewarded according to his works. Divine justice demands that it shall be even so. But since, because of sin, every man's life has been forfeited to justice, the reward for works will have nothing whatever to do with determining the question as to whether any one is entitled to life which as the free and gracious gift of God is bestowed only upon such as have faith in Christ and who follow Him and honor Him, or who at least in the time of their trouble look to Him, or call upon His name for help and deliverance. Whether, therefore, a man's soul is to be delivered from the power of Satan, sin and death, which is the wages of sin, depends not at all on his works, but rather it depends on whether his name is written in the book of life. If his name is found written there, he has received the gift of God which is eternal life. The reward that all such receive on account of their works will be a greater or less degree of honor and glory among the redeemed. On the other hand, those whose names are not written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, and the degree of punishment of which they are deserving, will be determined according to their works. After all the dead have been judged before the Great White Throne, and either acquitted or convicted, then death and hades will be cast also into the lake of fire. Thus the last enemy to be destroyed is death. And its prison house, hades or sheol, will be cast out to abide under God's wrath as a thing hateful to Him, and that henceforth is to be forever abolished.

Chapter XXIX

ALL THINGS MADE NEW

A New Heaven and a New Earth

The next and final series of visions granted to the Seer brought to his attention seven new things:

> "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (ch. 21:1, 2).

Previous to this chapter the Bible gives a brief outline of events connected with the history of our race during seven ages: (1) The Edenic age; (2) The Ante-diluvian age; (3) The Noachic age; (4) The Abrahamic age; (5) The Mosaic age; (6) The Present Evil age; and (7) The Kingdom age. Each of these ages began with God entering into covenant relation with the race of mankind, or with certain representatives of the race, and each of these seven ages ended, or will end in due time, with the outpouring of divine judgments because of man's unfaithfulness to obligations which he accepted when he entered into the covenant relation with God. Now there is contained in the last two chapters of the Revelation a very brief account of events predicted for the eighth age, and according to the significance of sacred numbers eight stands for new beginnings.

And John saw (1) a new heaven; and (2) a new earth. These were both new creations to take the place of the former heaven and earth that had fled from the face of Him that sat on the Great White Throne. This means at least the total destruction of this earth as at present constituted, the same as, for some reason which the Bible does not explain, the earth as originally created was destroyed. As it has been suggested

the occasion for that first destruction may have been the result of the testing and fall of some of the angels under the leadership of Satan (Eze. 28:12-15; Isa. 14:9-14); for these prophecies evidently go beyond the kings of Tyre and Babylon. In Gen. 1:1, it is declared, "In the beginning," or at some time in the undated and unknown past, "God created the heavens and the earth." That beginning may have been ten, twenty, or a hundred or more million years ago. Scientists are unable to agree themselves regarding the exact age of this earth. They are still speculating and theorizing, and the claims made by some of them have alarmed some Christians unnecessarily, because no matter what conclusion may finally be reached regarding the age of the earth, there will be no conflict between scientific and revealed truth.

Four Destructions of the Earth Revealed

Gen. 1:2 reveals that the earth, as originally created, became a ruin and empty; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. This is the first destruction of the earth mentioned in Scripture. It must have been the earth as originally created that was destroyed, for some reason not given, because Scripture teaches clearly that the earth was not created in the beginning "without form and void." The prophet declares:

> "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens: God Himself that formed the earth and made it, He hath established it, He created it not in vain (void, the very same word used in Gen. 1:2), He formed it (hence, it was not created without form) to be inhabited (rather than empty, or void)" (Isa. 45:18; 24:1).

The prophet Jeremiah (4:23-26) also records a vision he had received relative to the destruction of the original earth. Hence, what is recorded in Genesis first chapter, following verse two, is an account of *the restoration,* some six thousand years ago, of the earth *that had become a ruin,* in order to prepare it for the habitation of man whom God was about to create, and to whom it was God's purpose to give dominion over the earth.

The apostle also calls attention to the second, or later destruction of the earth in the days of Noah by the flood of waters (2 Pet. 3:5, 6), and then he declares:

> "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (v. 7).

Fire caused by electrical storms therefore, will be the principal agent employed by God to destroy the earth and heaven, or firmament, that now exists. This third destruction of the earth will be preparatory to the Kingdom age. And then, at the end of Christ's reign on this earth, and after the rebellion of Gog and Magog, the fourth and final destruction of the earth and the heavens is predicted, four being the number of the earth, and it is declared, "There was found no place for them" (v. 11). In other words, the destruction of the planet known as the earth will then be complete, and it will no longer exist in God's universe. Thus the occasion for the new heaven and the new earth which God will create at that time.

All Things on Earth Made New

To the Seer there was revealed also (3) a new relation to be established between God and those dwelling in the new earth:

> "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (ch. 21:3-5).

Because of this new relation, God dwelling with men on the earth, an ideal condition exists. It is as far removed and as different from that which is now the common lot and experience of man as could be well imagined: eyes are bright with mirth rather than dimmed with tears; death is banished, and there are no more mourners going about the street; gladness takes the place of sorrow, laughter is heard on all sides and there is none who weep; perfect health also is enjoyed with freedom

from all pain. The former things, that were the results of sin and its curse, are passed away. And having God not only as Friend, but as Companion, assures that man shall have all things richly to enjoy. This is no idle dream. The words are true and faithful according to the witness of Him Who sat upon the Throne.

> "And He said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (ch. 21:6-8).

The assurance, "It is done," is but a further illustration of a thing which God has purposed to do, viewed as already accomplished. To the God Who inhabitest eternity, "A thousand years are in His sight but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night." And the same unchanging God, Whose endless years do last alway, promises to give the water of life freely to him that is athirst: It is the promise of the Holy Spirit without measure,— a priceless gift freely bestowed along with the assurance that the overcomer shall inherit all things as a child of God. The form of this assurance is the same as those addressed to the churches in the seven epistles. Unlike the redeemed of former dispensations, the earth dwellers appearing in this vision, evidently have not attained unto perfection and been confirmed in holiness. They are an earthly people with a goal set before them and a rich reward is provided for the overcomers. They will continue, also to be moral agents, and having power to choose between good and evil they are responsible and will be held accountable to God. Hence the warning that evil doers shall have their part in the lake of fire. Thus God remains the same in every age. He loves holiness and rewards the good. He hates sin and all who do evil will be banished from His presence to abide under His wrath.

The Holy City, New Jerusalem

John saw also (4) the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. That holy city is merely a symbol used for the Bride of Christ whose glorious perfection, as changed into Christ's likeness, the Seer proceeds to unfold. In Revelation the 17th chapter, a godless city is presented under the figure of a lewd woman. Here the True Church of the redeemed, the Bride of Christ, is described under the figure of the holy city, new Jerusalem.

> "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (ch. 21:9-11).

The jasper stone is mentioned but once before in this prophecy, and then the Occupant of the Rainbow throne is likened unto it (ch. 4:3). And here, concerning the Lamb's Wife, Who has been made a partaker of the divine nature, it is declared, Her light, or the truth which emanates from her, was like the precious jasper stone, clear as crystal.

The New Jerusalem Is Not Heaven

The description here furnished of the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's Wife, or the True Church glorified, is frequently understood to be a representation of Heaven. Many sermons have been preached on Heaven with the holy city, new Jerusalem, as the Scriptural basis and authority to show what Heaven is like. Nothing, however, could be more fanciful or further removed from the truth as it has been revealed for our learning than preaching from this Scripture on such a theme. It illustrates the careless, not to say irreverent manner in which many handle the teachings of God's Word. It explains also why today among Christians much teaching that carries the stamp of orthodoxy is unscriptural, and on the other hand, why much that is Scriptural is opposed to orthodoxy so that to

declare the truth of God in the Church, which is supposed to be the pillar and ground of the truth, will often subject one to the charge of being heterodox. Even as the Scribes and Pharisees railed against the teachings of their own Scriptures as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, so today there are those, who having a zeal without knowledge, will hasten to warn the brethren to be on their guard against any truth that is opposed to orthodox opinions.

The Bride, the Lamb's Wife

The new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God is shown to John by the angel, and plainly declared to be, "The Bride, the Lamb's Wife." These glorified and redeemed ones are presented under the imagery of a wonderfully glorious, beautiful and marvelous city, and the perfection and beauty of the Lamb's Wife are revealed by the description given of this symbolic city, the new Jerusalem:

> "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates" (ch. 21:12, 13).

This imagery is explained by the Old Testament prophets, "Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (Isa. 26:1). And in connection with the Zion of the Holy One of Israel, during the Kingdom age, it is said: "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates, Praise" (Isa. 60:14-22). So here, salvation is the wall great and high that protects the Lamb's Wife from all possible enemies. The gates signify Praise, whether it be such as she offers to God, or such as she receives for herself. The angels represent her spirit of ministry. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on the gates of the wall suggest that representatives of each of these tribes have obtained for themselves a full reward and so share with Gentile Christians the honor of being in that class of the redeemed who constitute the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. Such is the symbolic significance of the city, new Jerusalem, with its

wall, with three gates on each of the four sides. Three is the number of the Trinity; Four is the number of the earth, and four times three or twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve tribes reveal that the work of the Trinity on the present earth has been entirely completed and perfected.

Matthias Not an Apostle of Christ

> "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (ch. 21:14).

In the True Church, the Bride of Christ and the Wife of the Lamb, the Gentiles are to be fellow-heirs and of the same body (with the true Israel of God) and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel (Eph. 3:6). The wall (Salvation) of this city therefore had twelve foundations on which were written the names of the twelve apostles (Eph. 2:20). The fact deserves attention that there are but twelve apostles whom Jesus recognized as being entitled to that office.

Before His ascension Jesus commanded the eleven apostles not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, namely, the gift of the Holy Spirit Who was to be their teacher and Guide and Counselor in all the work that they were to perform for the Master. However, without waiting for the Spirit, and at the suggestion of the impulsive Peter who assumed that the fulfilment of Scripture depended on him and the other apostles, they proceeded to determine who should succeed Judas Iscariot to the office of apostleship. To reach a decision they used the lot, a God-appointed institution, but one the use of which was not authorized in the new dispensation. The lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the apostles (Acts 1:4, 5, 15-26).

But the apostles were chosen by Jesus Himself, and He never delegated the authority to make that choice to the eleven. In His Own time and way, therefore, He called and appointed Saul, who was afterward called Paul, to be the successor of Judas in the office of apostleship. And Paul became the chiefest of the apostles while Matthias is never so much even as mentioned again. Thus very plainly Christ showed His disapproval

of the use of the lot in this dispensation of the grace of God. His followers were to look to and depend upon the Holy Spirit for divine guidance, even as Jesus had directed them to do, in all matters concerning which it was desired to learn and to understand His will. The fact that by the use of the unauthorized lot the apostles had selected Matthias and numbered him as one with themselves in the office of apostleship was probably the chief cause for Paul having so much trouble in the Church to establish his right to be called an apostle of Jesus Christ.

There were, therefore, but twelve foundations on which were written the names of the twelve apostles. One of these names certainly was that of Paul, and the name of Matthias was evidently omitted. It does not follow from this fact that in connection with the work and worship of the Church, whatsoever is not expressly and plainly commanded in the written Word of God is forbidden. Not at all; but it does teach that in all things the Church is to be obedient to the will of Christ, her divine Head, and when there is any doubt or question concerning what the Lord would have her do the Church is to look to the Holy Spirit, and to be guided wholly by Him, in order to assure her having the help and blessing of the Master in all she engages to perform for him. If thus mindful and obedient in honoring the Holy Spirit, it can be said to the Church, "Do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee" (1 Sam. 10:7).

The Bride of Christ Perfect and Glorified

> "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel" (ch. 21: 15-17).

The city, new Jerusalem, is represented as a cube, the only perfect figure. Each dimension, the length, breadth and height,

was twelve thousand furlongs, or twelve multiplied by a thousand, and the wall was an hundred and forty-four cubits, or twelve multiplied by itself. These numbers are used symbolically to set forth the completion and perfection of the Church, the Lamb's Wife, as the finished work of God. Thus the desire of Christ concerning His Church is here revealed to have been fully realized:

> "That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

These are the very results indicated by the symbolism employed. Then further,

> "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (ch. 21:18-21).

The building of the wall of this city was of jasper, the stone to which deity and the divine nature are compared. The city itself was pure gold, and thus free from the alloys of deceit and hypocrisy. And the foundations of the wall were garnished with all manner of precious stones:

The breastplate of judgment, which Aaron was to wear upon his heart, when he went into the holy place to minister before the Lord as the high priest of the children of Israel, was to be made foursquare and set in settings of stones, even four rows of stones, and the names of the various precious stones are given (Ex. 28:15-29). That breastplate was the type of what that nation would be and of the place it should occupy close to the very heart of God, provided it hearkened to His voice and kept His covenant. The promise of God was,

> "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:5, 6).

Israel as a nation forfeited that high calling, privilege and honor because of disobedience, unfaithfulness to covenant obligations, and finally, by rejecting and crucifying the Messiah, the Prince of Life.

The Church Substituted for Israel

The result was that in the plan of God the True Church was substituted for that nation. And the Church that Christ was to build would include the Gentiles not less than the true Israel of God. Here then in this city, new Jerusalem, it is not the gates of the wall on which the names of the twelve tribes were inscribed that are garnished; rather, it is the foundations of the wall (Salvation) on which were the names of the twelve apostles that were garnished with all manner of precious stones. For now the True Church is the holy nation, and as such she is a peculiar treasure of kings and priests unto God above all nations. And when the list of the stones which garnish the foundations of the wall (of Salvation) is compared with the list of those that were set in four rows on the breastplate of judgment (Ex. 28:17-21), and on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, it will be seen at once that only seven of the original stones appear in this prophecy. These are the sardius, topaz, emerald, sapyphire, amethyst, beryl and jasper. Then five are substituted, namely, the sardonyx, chalcedony, chrysolyte, chrysoprasus and jacinth. These are used for garnishing the foundations instead of the carbuncle, diamond, ligure, agate and onyx that are rejected of those stones on which the tribes of Israel were inscribed. Five is the number of human incompleteness and insufficiency: Seven is the number of dispensational fulness and completion. The true Church, therefore, will include the full number both of the nation of Israel and of the Gentile nations who have responded to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But while the nation of Israel forfeited the privilege of

being the foundations of the wall of the city she will nevertheless furnish the gates; and every several gate was of one pearl signifying that this people were redeemed, washed, purified and glorified, and which at once also associates them with the Pearl of Great price. Further, in this city the street was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass. Man is known by his walk, or by the way in which he goes, and this street reveals the holiness, sincerity and divine wisdom of one whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace (Prov. 3:17).

The New Temple

> "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (ch. 21:22).

In this city, new Jerusalem, the figure of the glorified Bride of Christ, the Lamb's Wife, John saw no temple, at least no material temple. Yet he saw (5) a new temple; for God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. This will be the time for the literal fulfilment of the words of Jesus:

> "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and WE will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

Here the Father and the Son are abiding in the True Church through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit without measure, and thus the Church becomes like unto the Son of Man in Whom dwelleth the fulness of the godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

The New Light

> "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (ch. 21:23-27).

In verse 11 it is said of this city, "Her light (knowledge truth, understanding) was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Here the source of her light is revealed, and the reason is given for her not needing either the sun or the moon to shine for her. "The glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. In the imagery of Scripture, the sun stands for divine intelligence and understanding, while mere human knowledge is represented by the moon. The Lamb's Wife, who is symbolized by this city, is herself a partaker of the divine nature; she shares with God and with Christ glory, honor, immortality, and being possessed of all knowledge and wisdom she has no need of further instruction; for she knows all things. She is in closest fellowship also with both the Father and the Son, and in their light she will see light clearly. And her light will be made manifest; in it the nations of the saved will walk and the kings of earth will bring to her their honor and glory, as will also the nations. These will be received and welcomed at all times for the gates of the glorified Church will never be shut by day, and there is no night there. As the light signifies knowledge and understanding, the night signifies the darkness of ignorance and error. In the new earth there will be (6) the new light that will for ever banish the darkness. And nothing that would defile, whether ignorance or sin, can enter that city, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This Scripture provides no ground for reasonable hope for a second probation to be granted unto the lost. The destiny of all such persons will have been determined already, at the close of the Kingdom age, when the dead were summoned to appear before the Great White Throne. They were cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death; and if they are ever to escape from that place and condition, the Bible at least does not so declare, or even offer a hint of such a possibility.

Saved as by Fire

All these kings and nations that will dwell in the new earth are such as are saved, or as will be saved before the end of the Kingdom age. But although saved, still their works have not obtained for them the reward of glory such as would entitle

them to be identified with the True Church, the Lamb's Wife. Hence they remain mere earthly beings and continue to be earth dwellers. Nevertheless, in the new earth they will enjoy the presence and blessing of God Who dwells among them. They will then be far more interested in the Church, in her worship and service than many such appear to be today. Whatever of glory, honor and riches the people, kings and nations then possess will be brought willingly and gladly into the Church to be consecrated to the service of God and of the Lamb. For at that time they will be walking in the light of the city that hath foundations whose Builder and Maker is God, and into which nothing can enter that will in any wise defile, but only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

A New Eden, or Garden of Delights

Then as the final vision, John beholds (7) a new Eden, or Garden of Delights for the people of God. He learns also that the present means of grace and of salvation are all sufficient, and that they will be nothing more nor other in the new earth than what are now provided.

> "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (ch. 22:1, 2).

The water of life, according to the imagery here employed, is not difficult to understand, because probably it symbolizes the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from the Father and the Son and Who represents the authority of the throne of God and of the Lamb. It is the same living water that Jesus offered the Samaritan woman for her salvation and comfort (John 4:10-14; 7:37-39), and so here, all the benefits of truth and grace that flow from the presence of the Holy Spirit are assured to the dwellers in the new earth. Likewise the Tree of Life represents what in the original Garden of Eden was the promised "Seed of the woman," but which in the new earth will be the Glorified Son of Man. In the midst of the street

(ch. 21:21), or path, or way, of it (the city, the Lamb's Wife), and on either side of the river was the Tree of Life. This signifies that Christ will dwell with His Church and that He will have the Spirit, Whom He has received without measure, abiding in Him. The idea seems to present the ubiquity of Christ in the new earth,—everywhere present with the Church and full of the Spirit. He is the true Bread of life (John 6:31-35), Who came down from heaven, and Who returned thither; but at that time He will fill the Church with His presence and He will accompany the Spirit, or the river of water of life, wherever it flows. The Tree of Life bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month, or twelve times a year; the number twelve suggests the perfection and completeness of the Great Physician for the purpose of healing the nations. Jesus will, therefore, be able to save to the uttermost all who will come unto Him. This is an assurance that even now He is sufficient for the salvation of all who put their trust in Him. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever, or for the ages.

The Curse of Sin Entirely Taken Away

> "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever, or for the age of the ages" (ch. 22: 3-5).

The true Church will not only be free from sin but also from its curse. That curse, due to the weakness and infirmity of the flesh, rests on even the best of Christians today; and since there is not a righteous man on earth that liveth and sinneth not, even the True Church is marred, because in her members are found failures and shortcomings that cause blemishes and imperfections. But when the mortal puts on immortality, and when each member of the Church bears the image of the heavenly, then sovereign power, or the throne of God and of the Lamb, shall be possessed by the Lamb's Wife, and strength

and beauty will take the place of weakness and imperfection. Then also His servants will serve Him with fidelity, beholding His face and having His name in their foreheads. Being transformed into Christ's image, they shall be like Him, and see Him as He is.

Ignorance, error, superstition, misunderstanding, doubt, mistrust, frailty, sin are each and all elements of the night which the apostle declares "is far spent" (Rom. 13:12). The glorified Church has reached the state of eternal day. There shall be no night there; for in His light they shall see light clearly, or have knowledge and understanding of truth, and they shall know even as also they are known. Hence they need no candle, human knowledge, neither light of the sun, divine knowledge, for the Lord God has given them light in its fulness and perfection, and like Him they shall know all things and with Him they shall reign to the ages of the ages.

> "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (ch. 22:6, 7).

The faithful and true sayings include all that has been revealed to the Seer, in the several visions; for God desires that His people shall know the things which must shortly be done and which Jesus is coming quickly to accomplish. As compared with eternity, or the endless years of God, a mere thousand, or two thousand years of time are not of sufficient duration to require reckoning or consideration. Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

The Last Message to the Churches

> "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book: worship God" (ch. 22:8, 9).

That is the last message. Man is not to worship saints or even angels, and much less images and dumb idols. God only, consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is worthy to receive the praise, adoration and worship of men.

> "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand" (ch. 22:10).

Five or six hundred years before the close of the Mosaic age or dispensation of law the greatly beloved prophet, Daniel, desired information regarding the revelation that had been committed to him; but at that time his request was denied. He was told,

> "Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Then, even at the end time, it was declared: "None of the wicked shall understand, *but the wise shall understand*" (Dan. 12:8-10).

Probably for the same reason the apostles of Jesus at the close of the Mosaic age, when they inquired of the Master, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom of Israel?" received the reply, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power, but ye shall receive power (including the power to know and understand these things), *after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you*" (Act. 1:6-8). The mission of the Holy Spirit was to lead the true followers of Christ into all truth, and to show them the things that should come to pass hereafter, especially the things concerning Christ. And now, since the Holy Spirit had been outpoured, John was not to seal the prophecy of the Revelation because it was intended for the understanding of all inquirers and seekers after truth; for such as these, having already entered the new dispensation of the grace of God, the time for understanding these things was at hand. This was a further part of the last message. And then like the watchman's message to the hardened and rebellious house of Israel,

> "Thus saith the Lord God, He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear" (Exo. 3:27; 20:39),

or like the Master's warning to His careless and indifferent disciples,

> "Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Matt. 26:45),—

in each case a message that was intended to alarm and to arouse those addressed with the suggestion that it was possibly even then too late to change the results; so to the sleeping and procrastinating sinners and to the careless and indifferent disciples of this present age, at the close of this marvelous revelation of God's plans and purposes,—a revelation that directed attention to the great tribulation, to the day of the Lord, to the Kingdom age and to the judgment of the Great White Throne, —in order to startle the careless so that they would improve present opportunities, and in order to encourage the faithful to remain steadfast, the message of the angel to the Seer concludes,

> "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life (right now, and TODAY, if men will only hear His voice), and may enter in through the gates into the city" (ch. 22:11-14).

The city, or new Jerusalem, which is now being builded to form the True Church, which when completed will be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, and the gates leading into that city will be found in the way of divine appointment. In contrast with all who will be thus blessed, it is declared,

> "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (ch. 22:15).

Such is the character of those who are without the Church, and when this list of non-church members is carefully con-

sidered, then the absurdity of those who make the excuse for not uniting with the Church,—"There are too many hypocrites in it,"—becomes apparent at once. In every generation of our race since Calvary the best and noblest people living on the earth have been church members. Granted that numbered among them are some mere professors and hypocrites, who from selfish and unworthy motives have united with the Church. But those who for this reason refuse to be identified with the Church certainly do not better their position, but they elect to remain identified with a much less reputable company of persons. In the Scriptures the word "dog" is a term of reproach frequently applied to those who are neither Jews nor Christians, or to such as refuse to enter into covenant relation with God (Matt. 7:6; Mk. 7:26-28, Lk. 16:21); "sorcerers" are such as hold communion with demons; "whoremongers" are those who no longer retain even self respect; "murderers" are persons who do not hesitate to strike at the very image of God as it appears in man; "idolators" are such as are so ignorant and depraved as to suppose that they are the creatures of their own workmanship, and those who make and love a lie, or hypocritical deceivers generally, are all children of the Devil, and they are like their father who was a liar from the beginning. All who are without the Church are in the world and in fellowship with the unregenerate portion of mankind.

The Final Assurance That This Prophecy is True

> "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (ch. 22:16; Num. 24:17; Matt. 2:22; 2 Pet. 1:19).

Since this is true the final gracious invitation given in this prophecy is not to be treated indifferently:

> "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (ch. 22:17).

That gracious invitation to WHOSOEVER includes even the dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolators, and

even deceitful liars who are like their father the Devil. Hence none need ever despair. Jesus is willing and able to save to the UTTERMOST ALL WHO COME and who take the water of life. A final warning is given that by many today is carelessly overlooked and disregarded,

> "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (ch. 22:18, 19).

The things here mentioned as written in this book are the blessings and rewards promised to all who do God's commandments. And now the last promise, prayer and benediction is given by the glorified Son of Man to all who love His appearing and Kingdom,

> "He Who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. AMEN" (ch. 22:20, 22).

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